

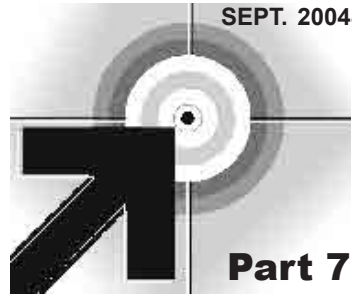
Shooting Straight

God's views on current issues and attitudes in the Family

By Maria

FD/MM/FM 3506 8/04

See the Good!



Part 7

The issue:

EVERYONE has times in their past that they look upon as “dark nights,” but some people have a hard time seeing any good in the difficult times they’ve been through. They look back with a self-righteous attitude, feeling that they were wronged or that things weren’t handled well. Perhaps they were wronged or things were handled wrongly. Mistakes may have been made that affected them or their loved ones badly.

2. However, the Lord was probably trying to use those circumstances to work in their life, and they’ve missed the point or haven’t benefited as He intended. It’s very possible that in many of these cases that people are looking back on as “mistakes,” the circumstances were used or even engineered by the Lord in order to bring out the best in them, or to draw them closer to Him, or to teach them something valuable, or even just as a test. It’s not that the Lord wanted these things to happen; He wants only the best for His children. But since they did happen, He wanted to turn them to good for you who love Him, and whom He loves.

3. I’m not condoning people making it hard on others by any means, and that doesn’t excuse mistakes or a lack of love and prayerfulness. But because we’re the Lord’s children and we know and love Him, I believe that nothing has happened to anyone in the Family that the Lord didn’t know about and use for good in their life, if they would let Him. That’s the way the Lord is—He can and will turn anything to good, if we’ll let Him. And in some cases, things probably were handled right—according to the way the Lord wanted them to be handled—and yet those involved aren’t willing to see the good, so they miss the point.

God's mind on the matter:

4. (Jesus:) There are no exceptions to My promise that if you love Me and are called to My service, all things will work together for good in your life. You could think of nasty situations and scenarios all day, yet there isn’t a single one you could come up with in your own mind, or any real-

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life example you can bring up, that I couldn’t show you how there is some good that can be brought out of it—for you and for all involved. And finding the good in a bad situation isn’t just a “glad game” exercise or a good idea; it’s vital to your spiritual health.

5. If you can’t accept that there could be a silver lining to some of the rain clouds of your past, then you’ll probably never fully forgive and forget about those things, and that can lead to bitterness, which is a severely crippling spiritual sin.

6. A lot of people have unpleasant feelings about things that have happened in their past, whether it’s something to do with an old Family policy, the way they were treated, something that happened, something that they didn’t agree with, someone who hurt them, and on

the list goes. A lot of people suffer from the memories of these things because they don't allow Me to show them the good that can be brought out of the situation.

7. A lot of people find it horrible when it's even suggested that they could find good in such a case, thinking that it minimizes what they went through. Such people tend to be quite self-righteous and blind, refusing to see that although I may not have agreed with what happened to them, all things work together for good to those who love Me and are called according to My purpose, and there just may be something in it for them to learn from. If nothing else, maybe I would use it to make them into a better person with more humility and compassion and empathy for others. But if you're stuck with blinders of bitterness on and all you can see is, "It was wrong!" then you'll never learn from the situation, you'll never forgive and forget, and this will hinder you spiritually.

8. It's well documented in My Word about the dangers of bitterness and how those things can grow and sour your outlook on life. For this reason it's vital that you do not allow yourself to look back at any situation, no matter how terrible it was, remembering only the bad. It may not be your favorite memory, it may even be painful, and you certainly may not have noticed any good from it so far. But if you'll reject the Enemy's negative spin and ask Me specifically how I would like to use that situation for good in your life, then I can melt that bitterness and can bring beauty out of your ashes.

9. What greater triumph is there than to bring good out of bad? That's the ultimate way to conquer your past hurts or things you didn't agree with—not by bitterness and thoughts of revenge, but by allowing Me to make you a better person on account of the bad that happened to you. That way the Devil doesn't win in any way. Not only was he unable to stop you

via the difficulty, but he actually contributed to making you stronger because you learned and grew and became more humble and loving on account of it, not less so.

10. But if you refuse to do this, you're doing more than just holding on to anger and resentment and giving room for bitterness to grow. If you cannot let Me bring beauty from your ashes, what you are actually doing is blaming Me, saying that I am to blame because I allowed a situation in your life that has no good side, no positive benefits, and no way that I can use it in your life. Harboring resentment toward God is a very dangerous thing to do. When you do this, you are much more in the wrong than whatever or whomever caused you your previous hurt or anger.

11. You cannot discount the possibility that although some things were bad and were mistakes, I could have allowed them because I had a greater purpose in mind. Consider the all-time good example of Joseph and all that he went through—the rejection by his brothers, the misuse, the slavery, the heartache, the false accusations, the imprisonment—all bad things. Yet in the end he was able to clearly see that although those were all terrible things, I intended them for good in the long run. Had he held on to his bitterness and wasted away in prison or slavery blaming all involved for the rest of his days, he never would have risen above those things and fulfilled My purpose for him.

12. A man cannot be found more righteous than God. You can't sit there and tell Me that if you were Me, you'd have done it differently—which is basically what you do when you self-righteously judge the past and say that I shouldn't have let things happen. You know that I am bound to My Word, therefore you should assume that in all cases, no matter how you feel about what transpired, there is a silver lining for you, and it's your job to find it!

Note: The "Challenging Thots" in this Letter address commitment and discipleship in general and aren't always related to the issue being discussed.

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13. There is such freedom in letting Me show you how sad or bad situations can be used to make you better. Then, although you cannot fully endorse past mistakes as good things, you can see how I worked them into the great tapestry of your life, to make it well-rounded, whole, and beautiful. I'm not going to tell you that no one has ever made a mistake which hurt someone else and was displeasing in My sight, but I can tell you that no matter what the mistake was or how bad it hurt, there is always freedom to be found in seeking Me and rising above.

14. Don't self-righteously judge the things that you don't even fully understand. If you're not asking Me for the good side, then you're only seeing the bad and are a prejudiced, partial judge who only knows one half of the story. Ask Me to show you all sides, including the good part that you may not have even realized was there. Then you'll be free from these things that could hold you back or give place to bitterness. Your faith will be strengthened because you'll see that once again I always keep My Word, and all things truly do work together for good.

Another issue:

15. (Mama:) Somewhat related to this is the attitude some people have of blaming the Family—leadership, policies, circumstances, even the Word—for all past bad experiences in their personal life.

God's mind on the matter:

16. (Jesus:) It's as simple as this: All things work together for good to them that love Me, who are called according to My purpose. Why do you think that verse is there to begin with? It's because bad things happen! Bad things happen, but I work even those bad things together for good to those who love Me, and to those who are called according to My purpose. There are no exceptions to this. All things work together for good. It doesn't matter where the bad things came from, who "did" them to you, or why they were caused, they can and will work together for good be-

cause you are My children whom I love. But you do have to do your part—you have to let go of the past; you have to be willing to forgive; you have to be willing to let go.

17. Yes, bad things have happened. There are things that have gone wrong. There are things that shouldn't have happened. But that's not just in the Family. The Family isn't the only place where things go wrong. It's even worse in the System! The things that happen in the world every single day are far worse.

18. There are terrible murders, kidnappings, extortion, fraud, theft, deceit, all kinds of abuses, maltreatment and perversions, to name just a few of the crimes in the world today—so many horrible things that go on in the world! There are bosses, parents, teachers, siblings and so-called friends who are unloving and uncaring. The people in the world have to get over so many things. If they're going to be productive members of society, they have to move on; they can't blame their lives or the way they turned out on something that happened to them, or someone who did something to them.

19. That's not to excuse the wrongs, nor am I grading on the curve and trying to say that what happened to you wasn't "so wrong" because it doesn't really compare to these other atrocities. But it can help you to put things in perspective and realize that maybe you haven't had it all that bad. Yes, maybe someone was harsh; maybe someone treated you unlovingly. But think about those in the world who suffer serious abuses every single day at the hands of others. Maybe you feel you've given up "so much" for the sake of My work. Think about those in the world who sacrifice so much for so little in comparison to the eternal rewards you will receive.

20. I'm not excusing anyone for being unloving, or for breaking the rules and doing things that were ungodly or uncalled for. They will receive their just deserts, you don't have to worry about that. But for those of you who were on the receiving end of unloving and wrong behavior or treatment, you have to ask Me to help you see the good, to

help you draw from it what good you can. If that is expecting too much, then a good first step is to ask Me to help you forgive, to put it in the past, and to go on for Me. If you've made big sacrifices and done it as unto Me, you can know that those will be repaid a minimum of a hundredfold. You have My Word on that.

21. But stop blaming the Family; stop complaining and blaming people for where you're at today or for things that happened to you in the past. Just think of people who have gone through much, much worse, yet they came through better for it. Those times when you suffer, when things go wrong, can make you and mold you into a better person. They test your mettle and make you strong. I'm certainly not advocating unloving or ungodly behavior, but things do happen because people are human, they are fallible, and they make mistakes. So when mistakes happen to you at the hands of others, ask Me to help you see the good that comes of it for you. These things draw you closer to Me, closer to your brethren, and you learn from them. Others learn from them, too.

22. So let go of the past, and move on with Me to the bright and brilliant future! Get out of the mud pits of the past, the quagmire of bitterness, of complaints, and let Me heal the wounds, mend the hurts, and wash you clean with My love and My promising future!

Having a proper perspective on the past in your conversations:

23. (Mama:) Along these same lines, some people seem to really like to talk about the past—especially the things that happened that were extreme, shocking, maybe overboard in a certain direction, etc. They're not usually talking about them maliciously; it's often just conversation. The stories are attention-getters. Sometimes people are laughing about them or making fun, and other times it's more serious or depressing. But whenever you talk about the negative, even if in jest or in a humorous way, it's not building others' faith or helping them to feel encouraged or confident

in the way the Lord leads and the promise of all things working together for good. It's usually discouraging and sometimes very sad to hear about things that went on in the past that weren't right.

24. The problem is that by recounting those stories over and over, often they become exaggerated and overly one-sided, so they're not even super accurate. It's understandable that that happens—it's a better story if it's extreme, and it's human nature to not bring out the other side or all the other factors when you're wanting to make an impression with your story. But repeating the negative like that, especially without all the other factors, reinforces the negative in people's minds, and even if there were legitimate mistakes made or lacks in the situations you're recounting, that's not what we should be dwelling on. In every situation where something bad happened, there was also undoubtedly a lot of good, or victories that came out of it, lessons learned, etc., because that's the way the Lord works—all things work together for good!

25. Following is some more counsel on this topic and how we should be looking at these things, and you can apply it to your conversations, to make sure that whenever you're recounting the past, it's done in the right spirit, from the right perspective, so that it's a blessing and faith-building to those who are listening.

God's mind on the matter:

26. (Jesus:) A mountain always looks a lot smaller when you're standing on top of it. You've learned to see Me in these situations, and once you have that perspective of faith and trust in Me and seeing things work out for good, what seems to you to be a small bump in the road, or even an inspiring turn of events because you know the end of the road, may to one who is in the midst of the battle be more of a stumbling block than a stepping stone.

27. How completely do you believe My Word? I said that all things work together for good to them that love Me. So if you truly love Me, then you know that anything, absolutely

anything that happens and that affects you in some way, has something in it that is good for you.

28. The problem is that too many cheat themselves of that good because they allow the Enemy to focus their attention on the mistake, the blunder, the seemingly wrong decision. If your eyes are on Me and you're trusting Me, then you have to accept that My anointing is upon those whom I place in positions of authority in the Family. If they are seeking Me with a whole heart and sincerely wanting to be used of Me and to be good shepherds, then even their mistakes are under My control and I will cause them to work for good in the lives of others. And even if they have gotten off track and aren't sincere in their love for Me and their flock, I still have the power to use even their mistakes and sins for good in the lives of those who do love Me.

29. But leadership being off track is not usually the problem. In most cases your leadership is and has been sincere. The times when they have been seriously off have been few in comparison to the good they have done. So looking back and criticizing anything and everything difficult in your life as being wrong is not a good or accurate perspective, and it's also not a healthy attitude for you spiritually.

30. The problem is not that mistakes are sometimes made, or things that look like mistakes; the problem lies in your attitude toward them. Even if something appears to be wrong in the eyes of man, it is designed to accomplish My perfect will for you who love Me.

31. Even your Father David, who was right in most things which I led him to do, made mistakes at times—such as his reverence for physical Israel and his desire to move the Family there. Other people also made mistakes which wound up being blamed on David for one reason or another—such as the Chain leaders, who were able to abuse their power because news of their abuses did not reach the ears of the king and queen.

32. But I allowed these things for a reason and a purpose. David was faithful in seek-

ing Me for My guidance, and I was the One Who allowed what seemed wrong to the carnal mind, both for his sake and for a multitude of other reasons. I was testing the foundations of the faith of many of the children of David as to where their faith was based. Each one had to choose: Were they putting their faith in man and expecting that somehow David would be perfect, or was their faith in Me and My power to turn any situation to good?

33. They could either come to Me seeking My face and asking Me to explain what I wanted to show them, and how to see and bring forth the good which they knew I intended for them—or they could choose to become resentful that David wasn't perfect, so how could they follow someone who wasn't perfect? They might as well just quit. Those who clung to Me were granted the faith and peace to trust Me that I would show them when it was time for them to know why this situation had entered their lives and how to use it to their good.

34. Depending on your own choices, you determine if seeming problems and mistakes by others bear good fruit or bad in your life. When the things you're relying on seem to be crumbling, you must have faith to bring them to Me and to seek out the good, no matter how bad things may appear. This determines whether or not you receive the good I intended for you, or whether you turn away into the blindness and mindset of the flesh, causing you to become upset, resentful, bitter, and filled with the Enemy's deceptions, until eventually what I have allowed or even engineered in love for you turns to doubts, bitterness, and hatred.

35. Mistakes and blunders are made even by those who are sincerely following Me the best they can, and upon whom I have placed My anointing for the task they are called to perform, whether it be the frontline soldier who witnesses every day or the one who is called to leadership in the Family. You must decide if your faith is resting on the flesh and the person, or on Me.

36. When you look at a leader, are you seeing Me and My calling and anointing in

that person?—Or do you focus on the flesh, expecting that because they have an important position that they should therefore be above making mistakes or getting things wrong once in a while? If you are seeing Me in them and realizing that even what seems to be wrong is still in My hands, then you'll keep going no matter what.

37. If you think that's too far-fetched and just an attempt to gloss over the mistakes of others, and that it's not scriptural, then maybe you should read the Bible. I allowed My kings, prophets, and other key leaders whom I used mightily, to make many serious blunders, and even sent a lying spirit into the mouth of some prophets to accomplish My purpose. Was that wrong? Was I wrong when I let King David of old make such a huge blunder in a moment of weakness and he took a census to gauge his ability to win the battle based on the arm of the flesh?

38. David was humiliated before the whole nation as the plague swept through the land because of his actions. But was that a total failure? Or was it a great lesson for all history of the fruits of relying on your own strength? Did the nation forsake him? No, the people followed David closer than ever, because they knew I was keeping him on track. Both David and Israel were humbled and drawn closer to Me.

39. So when there were mistakes made in the past, regardless of who made the decision, whether it was in some big combo, a DT camp, a small field Home, or the house of the king and queen, the issue is not that, "Someone else made a mistake and now my life is negatively affected or ruined, and I or others have to suffer because of their mistake." Other people's mistakes are between Me and them. It's not for you to judge them.

40. You should come before Me in full faith to find out what I'm using it for in your life. What good do I wish to bring from it in your life and walk with Me? If you fail to see every situation—even the "bad" ones—as something that can work for good in every life that is touched by it, then any bad fruit that is

borne in your life is your own fault. I will not give you burdens greater than you are able to bear.

41. When you look at your Father David, or Queen Maria or King Peter, do you see the physical person? Do you expect that because they have My mantle and anointing on them, they are now perfect? Do you think their every thought is always the "right" one? Or do you see a tool in My hands? Do you see someone who feels as you feel?—Someone who, despite their sincere love for Me and My Words, is still not free of the bonds of the flesh and its inevitable mistakes at times, and yet you see Me in them. You see and have faith that because of their desperation to be that tool in My hands, I have anointed them and placed them in this task. You see Me in full control, knowing all things and using their sincere desire to please Me above all else to cause even their mistakes to work together for good for them and for you.

42. There were many times when David proclaimed some mistake or blunder he'd made, such as his bout with alcoholism or his mistaken stand concerning unsaved blacks, and he would declare himself as nothing and the only good thing in him as My Spirit. Those who turned to Me in faith to see the good I wanted to bring into their life, and who acted on what I told them, went on to be stronger disciples. Their love and dedication to their king grew, because their faith in Me grew.

43. But those who looked at his apparent mistake in the flesh, who didn't seek Me to understand the good I wanted to bring about in their lives, became blind to My plan and purpose. Their faith in the flesh was shattered and they gradually sank into resentment, bitterness, and rejection. Was that David's fault? Or was he being exactly what I created him to be: a tool through which I could work to accomplish My perfect plan in each person's life?

44. So when you look back at the past, it's not that you should try to pretend that there were never any mistakes made. There were situations that will look like mistakes

from your perspective. What makes the difference is this: Can you accept that I brought good out of it in your life, and in the lives of all concerned if they chose to accept what I was giving them?

45. The danger is when you narrate accounts of supposed mistakes or wrongs to others, because then it gets others on a negative track too, and even more than an uninspiring conversation, it can hurt others' faith or cause them to stumble. Many times these topics come up, especially amongst young people. Many young people at times still battle with what they see as failures of the past in their upbringing.

46. But joining in the conversation and telling some of these accounts of things which seemed extreme at times, even when you add the good fruits which were borne, can reinforce negative aspects of others' perceptions about their past. This is also true for some who battle negativity about the past. When conversations turn to the past, I would have you focus on the positive and speak of the positive and the miraculous, and consciously check your every word to ensure that it carries a positive and faith-building spirit.

47. What you say carries more impact than you realize. What to you may seem like just a small thing, because you see the good fruits it bore, may to another become a stumbling block which could hurt their faith.

In summary:

48. (Mama:) Bad things happen—not just in the Family, but in the world too. And if you were to look around and compare honestly, you'd probably decide that the things that have happened to you could have been a LOT worse.

49. Granted, there have been mistakes made, and Peter and I have apologized multiple times for the bad things that happened that could have been prevented through instituting guidelines or stronger policies earlier. We are very sorry.

50. But the fact of the matter is, there are many other difficulties that are just a part

of life, which are not the fault of the Family or our fault. They're the fault of the Devil, sin in the world, and human nature—which is not perfect! They're also part of the way the Lord chooses to work in all of our lives. He allows and sometimes even engineers difficulties to draw us closer to Him!

51. Life wasn't meant to be perfect! It's immature to blame the Family—or anyone, for that matter—for the difficulties in your life. Focus on finding a solution or learning what you can out of it; then you'll actually benefit rather than being hurt by it.

52. Learning to handle difficult situations that you're faced with is one of the greatest tests in life. Difficulties, hurts, disappointments, heartbreaks, and suffering can either make you better or worse. And if you are worse for it, that's not the fault of the difficulty or the situation, because you are the one who chooses how you react to that difficulty and how it affects you. It's natural to be sad, it's natural even to have times where you're discouraged or are recovering from battle wounds. That's perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed of. But from there on, whether you choose to recover and be strengthened or stay in that wounded, "down," discouraged state, is totally up to you.

53. Especially now with the keys of the Kingdom, the weapon of praise, and all the spiritual firepower the Lord has put in our arsenal, there's no reason why we can't rise above whatever comes at us. That doesn't mean it's easy—if it were easy, it wouldn't be a test!

54. But you can do it. You can get over whatever is holding you back or bothering you from the past. You can ask the Lord to show you how He sees it, what you can learn from it, and then do it, believe it, and move on! You can ask Him to speak to you about current difficulties and how to look at them, how to approach them, so that each thing life throws at you benefits you. If you can master the art of rising above, looking at things positively, even praising Me for them, and learning all you can from each difficult situation, that is true success, victory, and progress!

Key promise:

55. The keys of faith, together with the gift of prophecy, can help you see each event in your life as I see it—the good, the benefits, the possibilities, the potential. When you can see things as I see them, it’s not hard to accept or recognize My hand in your life, because you’ll realize that all things truly will work together for your good, because you love Me.

Dig deeper:

- “Beauty for Ashes,” ML #114, DB 4
- “Healing in His Wings,” ML #969:13–14, Vol.8
- “Blessings from Battles,” ML #2632:1–4, 28, DB 10
- “Bitterness,” ML #2672:52–66, 100–132, DB 10
- “Beware of Bitterness,” ML #2840, DB 11
- “Problems and Solutions, Part 3,” ML #3071:98–109, Lifelines 23
- “How to Recognize and Get Rid of Bitterness,” ML #3170:25–51, Lifelines 24
- “So You Want to Be a Disciple?” ML #3458:109–115, GN 1043
- FJWL 1: #187, 353, 385, 393
- FJWL 2: #63, 163, 276, 332, 344, 407, 440, 570, 583
- “All Things Work Together for Your Good,” pages 93–101, Treasures
- “Makings by Breakings,” pages 723–726, Treasures

Challenging Thot:

56. (Jesus:) No matter how hard, how unfair, how naïve it seems at the time to let your own thoughts and perspectives go and instead embrace My perspectives, it is the way to victory, overcoming, maturity, and great happiness.

Healthy or Obsessive?**The issue:**

57. (Mama:) The Word has addressed the “thin is beautiful” mentality, but the fact is that many people still think that way to some

degree, or so it would seem. It’s true that it’s unhealthy when people are really overweight. But some people don’t have a healthy balance when it comes to drawing the line between what is “healthy” and what’s “too fat” or “too thin.” It’s one thing if you’re trying to improve if you actually have a problem, or focusing on some weak areas to look a little better, but trying so hard for “the perfect body” often leads to ungodly extremes and can even open the door to the Enemy and become an obsession.

God’s mind on the matter:

58. (Jesus:) If you want to know what My will for you is as far as whether you are just being healthy or whether you are being obsessive in the things you try to do to improve your body and stay in good shape, the best thing to do is to ask Me with an open heart—or, if it’s something you feel pretty strongly about, it could be wise to ask someone else to ask Me for you as well. I’ve made it very clear in both the Bible and the Letters that it’s important to Me that you stay in shape and remain healthy. It’s part of taking care of My temple. You weren’t made to just sit around eating and getting fat and becoming slothful. You were made for an active lifestyle, and as much as possible, that’s the standard I want you to shoot for.

59. But there is a balance and there is a limit to what is godly, and some of you cross it when you go too far over the line of just being healthy and you start to give in to the Enemy’s spirits of pride, vanity and self-glorification, or of depression, negativity, anorexia and bulimia. It might be hard for some of you to know what’s right and what’s wrong; what’s a healthy and acceptable diet to stay in shape and be healthy, and what’s going overboard because you’ve gotten too inundated with worldly ideas of beauty and perfection; whether you’re exercising to be fit for My service, or whether you’re doing it only to perfect and glorify yourself.

60. There are many ways to tell where the line is and what the proper attitude is concerning these things. The most important way, of course, is to ask Me to tell you how

you're doing in this area, whether you need to work out a little more and eat a little less, or whether you need to stop working out so much and start eating a little more, or whether maybe you should just keep doing what you're doing and not feeling that you have to continually be "improving" yourself or your diet or workout plans. I can tell you whether you're trespassing My guidelines by being too lazy and inactive, or whether you're entering a danger zone by making those things too big a priority in your life. Sometimes you need to "improve" to a certain point, but then enough is enough, and you can stop there.

61. In these days of discipleship and accountability, there's nothing that you need more than My personal Words to you so that you are not basing your actions on what someone else is doing, or what the world says to do, but you are listening to Me, getting My input, and then obeying what I tell you. Your body and how you keep it up is a sensitive, personal issue to many. I know this, and I can give you personal information just for you that will tell you what to do and how to do it, point out any danger, and give good counsel. But you have to be open to that counsel—both from Me and sometimes from earthly shepherds or peers giving you help as well. If you don't want to open your channel and lay all your weight and body issues before Me and ask Me about your health and your exercise, and your ideas of what beauty is and what you need to do to look good, then that's a sign that in one way or the other, your balance is off.

62. If you're too defensive about any issue related to health or body or exercise, then the balance is bad in some direction, and that should be a sign to you that you need help, that you need to seek Me and read My Word and get delivered from the worldly attitudes and take on My heavenly attitudes that will allow Me to personally shepherd this aspect of your life—both through My personal words to you, as well as through any earthly help and shepherding I might see fit to send your way.

63. Another way to gauge whether you're in line with My thoughts for you or whether you've taken in too much of the world is how well you can tolerate imperfections in yourself. My ideal for you is to be healthy, active, fit, and useful in My service, not to be physically perfect in the world's sense of perfection.—Because in My mind, there is no one definition of "perfect." How well you are able to deal with the fact that there will probably always be things about yourself that you are not comfortable with should show you whether you are able to accept My viewpoint, or whether your thoughts are still tainted with the kind of perfection the world wants to push on you.

64. If you can keep your exercise and dieting plans in moderation, even if there are still parts of your body that you don't feel are perfect, then you probably have the right attitude. If you are able to regularly get your get-out without going overboard, then you're probably doing okay. But if the fact that there are things about your body that you just don't like causes you to get obsessive and start to overdo in the areas of exercise or dieting, then the balance is false and your thoughts aren't in line with Mine on this issue.

65. Everyone has some aspect of their physical appearance that they wish was different, and even if it's not your favorite part of yourself, if you're able to go on serving Me and not let it take up a lot of your thoughts and worries, then you'll be just fine. It's when it becomes a consuming passion and obsession that it's not right.

66. Another way to look at this is to ask yourself how big a deal things related to your diet or exercise are to you. Are you able to pretty much eat what is set before you, giving thanks? Or are there several or many things which you will not eat?—Not because of actual health problems, but because you think they'll make your body look bad in some way or another. In some cases it may be true—some of you have become too overweight and do need to take more thought for the things you eat. Yet there are many of

you whose bodies are strong and healthy and beautiful just as they are, and will remain so if you stay within the healthy limits of moderation in your eating and exercise. Yet you hold yourselves to worldly standards and become picky and finicky to the point where you not only affect your own state of mind and health, but you portray a bad sample to others and can affect their health and state of mind as well.

67. What if you miss your daily get-out? Is that an earth-shaking problem for you? Will that cause you to go to exceptional lengths to get it in no matter what else gets pushed aside? Will it ruin your day if you have to skip it? Again, it is a question of balance. For some of you I would like to see greater faithfulness to the get-out requirements; yet for others of you, if something comes up in your service for Me that makes you lose your time of exercise every now and then, if you have a really hard time handling that, then you're probably too addicted to your exercise program, and this may be because you're struggling with trying to attain a certain type of body perfection that is not natural or My will for you. Or maybe the way you look or are trying to look is okay, but it needs to be of lesser importance to you and move a little lower on your priority list.—You need to have a better sense of priorities and be more balanced and less rigid about your plans and program.

68. My counsel for all of you is to look at the signs around you to gauge whether or not you are within My will. You're driving down the highway of life and My will for you in the area of exercise and fitness is posted in My Word like speed limit signs. My signs advocate good health and fitness, yet they also caution you to be moderate. What you must do, My children, is to look at the "speedometer" on your dashboard to see how fast you're going in relation to the signs that I have posted. Are you above My limits? Are you below? You should hit My will—not lag behind or run ahead.

69. My Words of counsel to you, the checking of your heart, the test of eating

what is set before you, the test of missing get-out, and the advice and counsel of friends and shepherds are your speedometer. These things tell you how you're doing. You should listen to those around you, as well as to Me, as well as search your own heart about this matter. If people around you regularly have to get on your case about taking the Charter-prescribed get-out time, then you should listen. Conversely, if people around you are cautioning you that you might be overdoing it a little, either exercising too much or eating too little, you shouldn't just brush them off, but you should take it seriously.

70. Getting your personal instructions from Me should always be the first step. But these other things are like the other seven ways to know My will; they're methods that will assist you in determining how you're doing and which standard you're shooting for—My standard of moderation or the worldly standard of vanity and obsession with self, or of laziness and slothfulness.

71. This is always going to be a personal decision, a matter of the heart. Even though it concerns your physical body, I cannot legislate righteousness. I cannot say in the Charter that all must weigh this much and eat this much and be able to do this much exercise. Everyone is different. You certainly shouldn't be letting the world's input tell you how you should be, because that may not be My plan for you, and in most cases it will never be. You're here to win the world for Me and to spread My good news of love to all you can, and I need you to be fit enough to get that job done—yet not obsessed with those things to the point that it's your primary occupation in life.

72. The answer is moderation. The answer is in referring to My written Word and Letters on the subject, and in hearing from Me about this issue and obeying My Words to you. Don't cut Me out of this area of your life. Let Me counsel you and show you how you can do even better and be even happier. Don't let anything steal your happiness by pressuring

you in a way that is not godly. Strive to forsake the pressure that the world places on you in these matters and align your thoughts with Mine; then you'll have a just weight, which is My delight.

In summary:

73. (Mama:) There's no hard and fast "letter of the law" to abide by when it comes to weight and diet issues, but the Lord has given several good "meters" that you can use to judge how you're doing: His written Word, His counsel and voice of prophecy, shepherding and godly counsel, how open you are to His counsel and instruction, how important these various diet and exercise issues are in your life, how easy it is for you to make adjustments and be flexible when necessary, how much you eat what is set before you, and of course the counsel of the Word, and checking your heart, etc.

74. I know the areas of diet and exercise and body image can seem small, mundane and physical, and not something you need to be real concerned about. But the Enemy hates you. He hates your loving, sacrificial service. He hates what you accomplish for the Lord. And he'll use anything he can to try to hinder you, hurt you, and make you suffer. When you veer from the godly, healthy limits the Lord has set in this area, just like any other area, the Enemy then has greater license to attack you and is more easily able to get in. So keep this area of your life in line with the Word and discipleship standard. If you have a weakness in this area, ask for prayer and safeguards, and fight your pride that would take you outside of healthy limits, so you can have the Lord's full blessing and protection.

Key promise:

75. Claim the keys of spiritual health, and put the health of your spirit above the health of your physical body through obedience, loving Me, and pleasing Me above all, and your physical health, stamina, appearance and testimony will improve simultaneously.

Dig deeper:

- "Nudes Can Be Beautiful," ML #1006:26–29, Vol.9
- "Man Looketh on the Outward Appearance," ML #3125:44–80, Lifelines 24
- "Living the Lord's Law of Love, Part 9," ML #3209:271–310, GN 812
- "Mama's Memos No.11," ML #3253:1–72, GN 858
- "Fight for Life," Parts 1–4, ML #3390–3393, Post-it GNs
- "Exposing Bacchus," ML #3402:153–174, Post-it GN #4

Challenging That:

76. (Jesus:) Despite what the Enemy would have you believe, I do care about your happiness and your enjoyment of life. Though it may seem unlikely at first, forsaking the counterfeits for My true riches will actually improve your quality of life, and will help you to be happier and experience more pleasure and joy during your days on earth.

Accommodating Those Who Are Growing Older

The issue:

77. (Mama:) Some of our FGAs are slowing down a bit physically, and can't pull as great a physical workload due to getting older, health problems, etc. Also, some people just naturally work slower than others; they're plodders, usually very faithful and thorough, but slower. The Lord told someone on my staff one time that they had a special anointing of going slow—and part of that anointing was the patience, faithfulness, and diligence that was needed in their job, to keep working on something until the project was complete.

78. But some people—especially those who are fast or who can accomplish a lot, tend to look down on those who go slower with a self-righteous or condemning attitude. It's sort of the worldly company viewpoint,

measuring usefulness by how much gets done and how quickly it's accomplished rather than looking at and recognizing the more unseen and extremely valuable qualities of patience, prayerfulness, faithfulness, etc., that often are part and parcel of someone who goes more slowly.

God's mind on the matter:

79. (Jesus:) The slowing down physically and the special needs that come with growing older are something fairly new to most of you, because the majority of FGAs are still fairly strong and able to carry a substantial workload. They may not be as energetic as they were 20 years ago, but you can't really call a 50-year-old "old" quite yet, ha. What you may not realize is that on the inside it's taking much more effort than before to keep up.

80. Even so, it's important that everyone is aware that physical symptoms of growing older affect people at different times and in different ways. Some of My children are full of energy till the age of 70, 80, even 90, whereas others start feeling squeaks in their joints by the age of 45! The Family has been so young for so long, meaning that for most of the 30 years of your history, there have been very, very few elderly people. But things are definitely starting to change with so many FGAs reaching 50 or even 60, and the number is only going to increase. So you young folks are going to have to ask Me for greater understanding of those who are feeling the symptoms of growing older. You're going to need to accept this physical slowdown for some as an important part of Family society.

81. Now, by slowing down I don't mean that I expect less of them spiritually, and I don't excuse them if they become old and cranky in spirit—there's no reason for that, there's no good excuse for it. No matter how old you are, you can remain a new bottle in spirit, and part of that new bottle spirit is happiness and faith and expectancy and joy and ability to change—all characteristics associated with youth and zest for life. So there's no reason

for anyone to lose their zest for life! But when it comes to physical strength and energy, that does wane and change with age, and in some cases as people get older they will need to take on a new ministry, or adapt their present ministry. This is normal and part of My plan.

82. I don't look at those who are growing older as failures by any means. They've fought long and hard, often years before some of you young people were born. I want them to continue to serve Me with their all—heart, soul, spirit, body—but that is not judged by how many hours they may work or the number of accomplishments they can chalk up each day. It's not about math; it's about doing your best, and for many of these older folks, their best is to serve Me at a slower pace.

83. Don't get the idea that it's more effective to ensure that your Home consists entirely of energetic, burn-the-candle-at-both-ends personalities. If you vote the older folks out of your Home because they can't take on the same workload they used to, then you're going to run into some serious problems. For one thing, I can't bless it—because My way of judging usefulness is not based on outward appearance or accomplishments. If you're judging with a worldly viewpoint, your perspective on life is skewed. For another thing, you're not going to have a balanced team, and you'll find that part of your "anointing" as a Home is missing—because I choose to work through each person, each teammate. You'll miss out on the outstanding contributions an older, experienced person can make.

84. Face the fact that, as smart and energetic as you think you might be, there's no substitute for years and years of experience. If you think your five-to-fifteen years of experience with adulthood is enough to make your Home a success, then you're obviously too young and immature to realize how important it is to have solid, experienced, and, yes, even slower-moving people in your Home. For years your Father David filled this role almost single-handedly for the Family as a whole, as "Dad" to your parents and "Grandpa" to you. But now that the

Family has grown older, there is an abundance of wisdom from which every Family Home can draw. You have many who can play the role of a dad, and even some who can play the role of a grandpa to you.

85. So please, My children, don't look down on these FGAs, but instead accommodate their needs and draw from the newfound strengths that come from adjusting to a slower pace. Try not to be blinded by your youthful zeal; help make the Family work by availing yourself of the natural balance that is occurring now as some people grow older.

Additional reading:

86. (Jesus:) There's something to be said for going slow! It takes all types to make the Kingdom stand, and this is not to make those who move at a faster pace feel bad—because maybe that's their anointing. But it takes a special anointing to go slow, to have the patience to see things through, to prayerfully seek Me about the details, and just keep working until the project is finished.

87. Going slow isn't showy; you don't have a lot of obvious accomplishments for your work. But as long as you're moving forward at My pace, pushing to stay on My timetable, it's a very necessary quality. I'm not talking about laziness, or procrastination, or unwillingness to change. Those things are weaknesses, and they are sometimes the flip side of the strength of going slow. But steady progress forward, and patience and faith to see things through to the end, are qualities to cultivate and encourage in people, and going slow is part of that.

88. So those of you who are naturally slower, take heart! You fill a role that those who move quicker could never fill. Without you, the Kingdom would be incomplete and severely lacking. Be thankful for your special anointing, and praise Me for it. Be aware of the weaknesses that come with it of sometimes going too slow, or analyzing things too much, and be open to shepherding and change in those areas. But don't feel like you have to become a Speedy Gonzales, because there are plenty of

pitfalls and weaknesses and inherent sins that come with that characteristic too. Just be what I made you to be—press in to the Kingdom of God, and be thankful you have the patience to see things through! I need you just as you are!

In summary:

89. (Mama:) As the Family grows older, there will naturally be those who have to slow down physically. As long as they're still giving their all to the Lord in the spirit, they will have lots to contribute to the Home— things that those who are younger or less experienced don't yet have. So don't criticize or look down on them or try to get a team of all younger people so that you don't have to accommodate those factors. Many of our older generation have been serving the Lord since before some of you younger folks were born, and as such, besides whatever load they're able to pull in the Home, they have a lot to give in the way of love, prayers, wisdom, understanding, experience, and the list goes on. A part of each Home's anointing comes from having a balanced team, and our older and more experienced members are a vital part of such balanced teams.

Key promise:

90. I am able to clarify your perspective quickly, if you will call on the keys and then open your heart to hear how I see things. In just a few moments of communion with Me, you will be seeing things much more clearly, and will have My mind and understanding.

Dig deeper:

- "Stop, Look, Listen," ML #74:29–40, DB 4
- "Get It Right," ML #1860, DB 2
- "Be Encouraged," ML #3047:84–170, Lifelines 23
- "Overcoming the Generation Gap," ML #3161:20–24, 161–168, Lifelines 24
- "Self-Righteousness—The Great Barrier to Uniting the Generations," ML #3293:139–169, GN 897
- "Old Age," Word Basics

Challenging Thots:

91. (*Jesus:*) The trying of your faith is more precious than gold. You must believe that promise when the big battles hit. When you feel like things are getting too rough, or you're hit with some strange fear or doubt or worry, or the Enemy tries to tell you that you won't be able to make it much longer, you just have to face the battle with the faith of a warrior. You might not feel like you have the faith of a warrior at the time, but that doesn't matter; just act like it and move forward like you are that warrior and the Enemy will never know the difference.

92. You are that warrior as long as you move forward by faith, whether you feel like it or not. Act like it, and your faith and obedience will bring the power of My Spirit to your aid. Your armor is indestructible. You carry weapons of mass destruction to the Enemy's imp. You are powerful in the spirit because My promises will never fail. You might be shaking on the inside in the face of the Enemy's attacks, but just yell in his face, "Tremble, you devils! Run for your lives! You're about to feel the full force of God's army!"

93. The Enemy will hit you hard in the days to come. It's the destiny of all My brides to pass through the heat of battle. So when he hits, rise up in the spirit and fight. You will win, even if you feel like a wimp. Put on the power of My Spirit and move into battle. My warriors of old rallied their spirit to battle by screaming out positive war cries; their commanders psyched them up for the fight with soul-stirring speeches. Every warrior needs to keep the vision before his or her eyes and the promise of victory and what they stand to gain, in order to be willing to pay the price of battle. Remind yourself of the victories ahead, the prize, the progress, the ground gained, and the defeats the Enemy will suffer.

94. You will pay a price, but it's worth it, because once you pay it and win this victory, you won't have to fight this battle again. The Enemy is fighting hard in a last-ditch attempt to take away the power and destiny of

the Children of David who I have called and ordained for this time.

95. If you fight today's battles, this week's battles, this month's battles, and eventually finish with this year's battles, you will never have to fight the exact same battles again. Battle by battle, victory by victory, you will win your place fighting by My side into the End.

B&D?

The issue:

96. (*Mama:*) Some people are into mild forms of B&D (bondage and domination), and some might even be experimenting with or interested in S&M (sadism and masochism). Sexual perversions are a big thing in the world, and worldly sex has become quite ungodly and hurtful. So it's not surprising that some in the Family are interested in these things, because they're played up as being such a big deal, so "exciting" or "daring," and some people, in their search for variety, have crossed the line into weirdness.

97. At the same time, some people think that even mild "bondage"—like blindfolds, toy handcuffs, or any form of slapping someone's bottom, etc.—are "evil," or at the least really "pushing the envelope." Where is the line, and when does it go from being "fun" or "variety" to "worldly," pushing the envelope too far, and even becoming ungodly?

God's mind on the matter:

98. (*Jesus:*) In rejecting the binding mores and inhibiting traditions of the church system, the world has run headlong into the arms of the Devil to find the sexual freedom they crave. It's such a sad and sorry story, and there are many dead and dying victims in spiritual prison to these sexual vices and the spiritual torment that often accompanies them.

99. It's one of the Enemy's favorite strategies to take any controversial topic and get you to analyze it and figure it out in the

flesh, judging it on merely a surface level. If you try to figure it out in the flesh, with a specific list of “dos” and “don’ts,” you’ll often miss the point entirely. Whereas if you come to Me, I can teach you how to see it in the spirit, and that is a much surer and more wise way to judge and live your life. But it requires more sacrifice, greater obedience, greater love and understanding. It requires humility, and goes far beyond what the “letter of the law” would tell you.

100. It’s like the Ten Commandments vs. the Law of Love. The Ten Commandments were strict, yes, and impossible to keep, but many people prefer the Ten Commandments to the Law of Love, which goes so much further and is so much more binding. With the Law of Love, you can’t just “not sin”; you also have to love Me with all your heart and soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. So people in the church system refrain from obviously perverted sexual practices and count themselves righteous—while they go about spiritually degrading and abusing others every day through the sinfulness of their hearts and their lack of love.

101. The bottom line is this: If the heart is right, the actions will be right. If the heart is loving, the actions will be loving. If the heart is pure—filled with My Spirit—the actions will be pure.

102. I know some people reading this are waiting for Me to get to the part where I say something like, “Handcuffs are okay but not ropes,” or “domination is okay but not inflicting actual pain,” but that’s not the main point of this lesson. I will get into more specifics in a minute, but first I wish to impart the spirit of what I want to get across to you.

103. Satan wishes to bring you into bondage, and I wish to free you with My love. Which do you wish—the bondage of Satan or the freedom of My love? His world is so warped, so backwards, upside-down, inside out, colorless, filled with hate and greed and selfishness. My world is pure and clean, filled with light and love and goodness, filled with songs of praise to the Creator, and yield-

edness and true happiness, unselfishness, and selfless love.

104. What you do with your body affects your spirit. The state of your spirit affects what you do with your body, or to the bodies of others. When you lift your hands in praise to Me, it affects your spirit in a good and powerful way. When you give an affectionate hug to someone, you affect both your spirit and theirs. When you hold hands, or dance around, or clap, these are all things that affect your spirit and/or the spirits of others. So your actions are very important, and how you act or interact with others is also very important, and is a manifestation of your heart and your spirit.

105. Are you being My hands, My eyes, and My lips to those around you? Are you being Jesus to others? Are you letting others manifest My love to you? Or is your own spirit dominating your actions toward others, your attitudes, your practices? Is Bacchus directing you this way and that, like a little puppet, or are you being a holy hole for Me? Are you glorifying yourself and the world through your words and actions, or are you glorifying Me and lifting Me up?

106. The spirit, the spirit, is the most important. If your spirit is Mine, yielded to Me, then your actions will be Mine, yielded to Me. If you can truly say that whatsoever you’re doing, in word or in deed, you’re doing all to the glory of God, then your actions will be right and pure and of Me. If you truly desire to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s, then you need have no fear of getting off track. If you truly love your neighbor as yourself, and are thinking about his or her needs, desires, wishes, and how to make him or her happy, within the godly boundaries of My Law of Love and the Charter, then you can know that I will be able to lead you and help you to do the right thing. If you are truly open to My direction in your life through My Word, prophecy, and the shepherding of those spiritually mature in Me, then you can rest assured that even when you begin to stray from My ways, you will quickly be brought back

into full fellowship with Me and learn more about My wishes and desires.

107. Satan's perversions seek to inflict harm upon the spirit and the body of another, for he hates selfless love—and what classifies these things as perversions is based around using another for selfish pleasure, or seeking to fill the spiritual void created for Me with senseless diversions and harmful practices, or crossing the boundaries that I have set for you and expect you to obey. Selfless love is Satan's archenemy, for I am Love. And so anything he can do to draw man away from truly loving his fellow man, he promotes and encourages.

108. He hates your wonderful and God-made bodies, which house your souls, and he seeks to destroy both, and has succeeded in destroying many through deplorable vices and habits that darken the understanding of man and alienate his spirit from Me. He has many in prison, trapped in a world of their and his making, where they refuse to see or accept My light, My pure love, My loving ways. It's a form of ultimate rebellion against Me and rejection of Me, a refusal to accept sex as a pure gift of God, as a loving vehicle with which to propagate the love of God.

109. Truly loving and God-created sex is also truly humbling, for you bare your soul before another, and when loving Me intimately as My bride, also before Me. But pride is the way of Satan, and so he seeks to pollute every aspect of the sexual relationship between a man and a woman, seeking to enshroud the spirit in acts of pride and hatred, of selfishness and mockery.

110. I will give you some general guidelines that you can judge your actions by. But even within these guidelines you must remember that it's the spirit that makes the difference. Something might be generally okay if it's done in love and humility, but if the same thing were done with pride or selfishness, it could be in a very wrong spirit, and thus would not be okay with Me. I also don't want anyone to excuse themselves or their actions from this lesson just because I

don't cover what they're doing specifically. The guidelines I give you here are to give you an idea of what I consider okay when done in a loving spirit, and what things are never okay, no matter what spirit you think you're in. You must also remember that these things are only okay if both partners agree to them, and one should not be pressuring the other into something he or she doesn't have the burden, desire, or faith for.

111. In general, anything that knowingly causes pain is not of Me, and is a perversion of the natural, beautiful, clean and pure way I created sex. I don't mind if you want to use toy handcuffs or scarves to tie hands, or blindfolds to enhance the other senses. Even gently slapping someone on the bottom is okay by Me if the person likes it and wants it and it doesn't get rough. There are many ideas for bringing fun and variety into your sex life published in *Eve*, and many more that I can give you in prophecy, if you'll ask Me. Those sorts of things can be fun and bring variety without causing any kind of pain or fear if they're done in My Spirit, with the right people, and under the right circumstances. They're playful, they can be loving and sexy and fun, and for those who like them, it's variety and enhances their sex life.

112. But in all your ideas and variety seeking, nothing should cause actual pain or damage to your body. It should not even have the risk of damaging you or your partner. You are My temple. If something causes pain, if it leaves marks, if it could potentially hurt you or someone else, then you've ventured out of the safe zone and you're starting down a dangerous path, where you have to do more and more in order to get a thrill, and the end result is dangerous, dark, and painful. In essence you're contravening My Law of Love, because the basic premise is that it should hurt no one. And that includes your physical body.

113. Anything that causes actual pain is not okay. If it causes pain, it's wrong, and is taking you down the wrong path. If it is in any way physically hurtful, or has the

potential to be so, then it is against My rules and against My ways. There are also some acts of role-playing that are not in My Spirit, not a good thing for you to be pretending, and even if it doesn't cause pain, I don't want you to pretend something that wouldn't be okay in real life.

114. Some of you like to experiment, and might wonder if you can do things that are okay but just take it a little further, because after all, you might think that just trying out one thing that's a little beyond the boundaries that I have set is not so bad if both parties are in agreement. But you must remember that one little disobedience opens the door to more, and especially with sexual experimentation, you only have to go a little way down that path before you start desiring more, and even your sexual appetite becomes distorted and perverted. Sooner or later you're much further down the path of perversion than you ever intended to be.

115. Or, even if you only do it once, why would you want to open that door of temptation to yourself and then have to contend with the lack of faith and the lack of My full blessings that disobedience will bring into your life?

116. I like for you to have fun. I created sex to be extremely enjoyable, and you, My children of David, have so much freedom to enjoy godly, loving sex, so long as you stay within the boundaries of love and loving interaction. I'm not asking you all to become mild and totally tame in your dates—I realize that some of you like things more passionate and physical, and that's fine. I'm just asking you to keep yourselves in check and stay away from the temptation and desire to go down the road of perversion and pain.

117. You know what I mean when I talk about something being too rough or unloving, because it's anything that is actually painful. One way you can tell if something is getting a bit too rough is if it's causing marks—such as slapping turning to hard slaps, or nibbling turning to biting. I am merely using those as examples because it's something that's

clear, and that the mild version of is fine and within the Law of Love, whereas the more extreme is taking you down the dangerous road of perversion and pain that you don't want to go down. The same general principle applies to other concepts, too—it can either be acceptable if done in My Spirit, or it can be too rough and contravening My Law of Love, depending on how you do it.

118. So, My loves, seek to be pure in Me, and to convey My pure love to others. Seek to glorify Me, even in your times of sexual fellowship. Seek to be samples of My ways of love. Seek to encourage and uplift and feed and nurture both the spirits and bodies of others, by doing things with the motivation of true, God-given love. Seek to love others as I would love them. Seek to speak the language of love that another will understand, and do not insist on speaking only in your own language of love—those things that you personally interpret as love. My love speaks to each one's heart in different ways, and as you seek to be a vessel of My love to another, I will anoint you with creativity to truly be My eyes, My lips, My hands, and My mouth to another, and you will have all the variety you need without taking from the pools of selfishness or pride or worldliness or disobedience. It's the spirit that makes the difference.

Additional reading:

119. (*Jesus continues:*) Why is it that you feel cool about being rough? There's nothing wrong with having more passionate or physical sex at times, but if you pride yourself in being rough and tough—especially to the point of being insensitive to the needs of others—that's obviously not the right spirit. Why is it that you want to be pushing the envelope and crossing the line of what's godly, just to make you feel better or “hotter” in your sex life? It's because those are the ways of the world and they are propagated and advertised by the Spirits of Seduction and Obsession and Bacchus, who try to lure you in through the carnal ways of looking at things. It's also an effect of the way movies, media, and pornog-

raphy all promote those perversions as being “hot,” “advanced” or “wickedly sexy.”

120. If your mind has been tainted by the world and its ways, it may seem uncool and too simple to be loving in a way that is godly and clean. Your first thought could be, “Yeah, I could just fall asleep, it’ll be so boring.” But that’s not true! Why does sex have to be evil to be good? It’s the Devil, the father of lies, who is deceiving you, tricking you, and has put blinders on you to think that this type of sex is cool and that godly sex is uncool and boring. You can have fun, you can have awesome sex, you can explore, try new things, be adventurous and still stay within the realms of love, healthful sex and cleanness. Sex doesn’t have to be evil, naughty and dirty to be good. It can be clean, loving and exciting, and be even better!

121. Give Me a chance. Try out having fun the good way, the loving way, the kind way, the passionate and exciting way, and it’ll be even better because not only will your body feel great, but you’ll not have the cloud of darkness that can come over you when you’re dabbling in the sex that the Devil promotes and propagates.

122. Give love a chance! If you can’t take it the good way, the right way, the way that sex was created and intended to be, then you should seek help and prayer, and I can change your desires and appetites and help you to desire loving, godly sex once again! I want you to have fun! I want to help you desire what will be good for you, what will bring down My Spirit. I want to protect you from every evil attack of the Enemy. So try the spirits, live in love, do everything in love, and you will be blessed—even if it takes faith for now, even if you have to ask for prayer to have your “taste buds” redone, that’s okay. Just do it!

In summary:

123. (Mama:) The Lord is so sweet. He doesn’t want to restrict our fun. He just wants to protect us and keep us safe. He draws the line clearly that if it causes pain, it’s not of Him. If it could cause hurt or damage, it’s

also not right, not godly. He also gives a lot of good counsel on acting within the guidelines of the Law of Love—staying in His Spirit, doing things in love and humility and unselfishness.

124. I realize that some of you might still have some questions, since the Lord didn’t talk about all forms of sexual perversion. But if you do, I encourage you to ask the Lord further, and to also ask your shepherds or other experienced older folks whom you’re with, as they can probably help you hear from the Lord or receive confirmations for you if you like.

125. Some general questions you can ask yourself and even ask the Lord about that will help you make your decisions and stay in His Spirit are: “Is my heart right? Am I open to His counsel? Am I being truly loving? Am I doing it in a spirit of humility and giving? Am I glorifying the Lord?” What you do with your body and your actions affects your spirit. The Enemy is always trying to destroy and degrade the gift of godly, loving sex. Don’t let him pollute your times of fun and pleasure and giving!

Key promise:

126. Through the keys of full possession you can become the embodiment of My love for anyone, and know their heart and their needs. Call on the keys to fill you with My love, and you won’t have any trouble knowing what to say or do or how to act, because I will act and speak through you.

Dig deeper:

- “Revolutionary Women,” ML #250:9–20, DB 5
- “Porno Movies,” ML #935, DB 1
- “Movie Reviews,” ML #1657:18–25, GN Book 16
- “Sinless Sex,” ML #1969:37–50, DB 8
- “Issues, Part 9,” ML #3380:74–94, GN 987
- “Fascination for Evil,” Word Topics

Challenging Thots:

127. (Mama:) What’s the secret to happiness?—Giving, unselfishness, and making

others happy, because it all comes back to you. Making **others** happy makes **you** happy. That's one of God's spiritual laws, just like gravity is a law of the earth. Sometimes it takes a while, but it's never left unfulfilled.



128. (Jesus:) **It all comes back to spelling J.O.Y.** Putting Me first and obeying Me falls into that category, as well as keeping things in My spirit, then putting the needs of others next, and yourself and even your personal preferences and desires, last. **That's** the way to be truly happy and to hit the bull's eye!

Homosexuality

The issue:

129. (Mama:) **Many of our young people have taken a tolerant view toward homosexuality, some to the point of wondering what's so bad about it.** This is possibly part of a backlash against values or "rules" or attitudes you have grown up with all your lives, but that doesn't make it accurate or right. Of course, we are to love the sinner, and the Lord dearly loves homosexuals just as much as He loves every other lost person in the world, and it's our duty to show them His love, to witness to them, pray for them, and care for them like any other lost sheep. But we are also to hate the sin, and the "hating the sin" part is what is lacking—to the point that homosexuality has become a topic that many joke about a lot, or "pretend," or take lightly. Some of our young people have adopted the attitude that it's natural, genetic, or a lifestyle that we should be more "open minded" about. After all, homosexuals are often nice people, easier for girls to talk to, they understand women, don't makes passes at them, etc.

God's mind on the matter:

130. (Jesus:) **Don't let yourselves be pressured by the Enemy into losing your convictions.** I want to remind you, My Family, that there are sins that are very much still sins in

My sight no matter what the popular opinion of the world says. I want to encourage you to stay strong in your stance against such sins, regardless of how unpopular that opinion may be, and regardless of what lies or doubts the Enemy suggests to your mind.

131. Here I want to deal specifically with the issue of homosexuality, and the growing tolerance of this sin, even in My Family. I see the climate of the world, I am attuned to the attitude shifts that take place, and I am well aware that being accepting of homosexuality is at this time the hallmark of open-mindedness and anti-bigotry. I can see very clearly the Devil's agenda and how he is browbeating the world into accepting this vice by labeling any who stand against it as hate-mongers, bigots, and narrow-minded freaks.

132. But you don't have to be taken in by this. You don't have to think as man thinks. You should be proud to be different, and if your attitudes have become contaminated by the world in this aspect, you should seek to be delivered by the renewing waters of the Word.

133. You should also realize that the world as it exists today is almost entirely run by the Devil and his AC crowd. There can be little doubt of this to those of you who know My Word. Therefore, you can easily assume that if the climate of the world is pro-gay—and with the world also controlled almost completely by the Enemy—then this pro-gay "accepting" attitude must be part of Satan's agenda, and you can rightly deduce that this is one of his ploys and one which you should rid yourself of, so that you can see as I see and take on My mind.

134. Many of you of the second generation embrace tolerance and open-mindedness, trying to escape from being called dogmatic, Bible-thumping bigots, holier than thou, or the dreaded "closed-minded" label. But who is giving you these labels, and who are you afraid of? I'm not calling you these things; in fact, I'm calling you lovers of truth and freedom who are escaping the perversions of the world, and embracing genuine truth and

knowledge. The rest of My disciples are not calling you bad things either.

135. No, it is only the world that would put these labels on you, and the world hates you already and will never accept you; therefore you should make no attempt to think as they think in an effort to please them. Those who would criticize you will always find something to criticize you for. On the other hand, those who are searching for truth will be drawn to the spirit of conviction and nonconformity. So you don't need to compromise to attract them.

136. Some of you have so compromised with Pan's wiles that you have begun to develop such conclusions for yourself: "What's so bad about this? Maybe it is normal, maybe it's okay," and so on. Even if you think this is your own idea and something that fits into your own code of ethics, the truth is that it is corruption from the world, and through a gradual weakening of your convictions, your mind has become open—not to genuine truth or morals, but to Pan, who is seeking to implant within you attitudes that are in line with the rest of today's deceived masses.

137. But whatever the reasons you have begun to think the way you have, the fact is that homosexuality is a sin in My eyes, something that I hate and that is repulsive to Me. Homosexuality is the way of Satan and his demons. It is not the way of Heaven. It is not the way of truth or love. It is the way of perversion. It is the Devil's rebellion against My way, and against My plan for mankind, My beauty of creation and procreation and health and life.

138. There's nothing wrong with what I've said. I'm not narrow-minded or bigoted; I state only the truth. I created the world, and all that exists is because I have made it to be so. I am the One Who is truly qualified to state what is and isn't right. If you believe that I am the Creator, then you must also believe that I have a sure set of standards of what is or isn't acceptable to do with the existence that I have given you. For man to be with man is a

contradiction of My rules; it's something that I am against. That's a simple fact.

139. So it's to be expected that the Devil would seek to not only create a twisted act in defiance of Me, but to then take it over the top and try to make it the accepted and morally correct thing in today's society. Right now those who stand against homosexuality are seen as backward and wrong and filled with hate and prejudice. It's seen as a flaw in a person if they can't bring themselves to accept this sin. Satan is not content with creating perversion—he then seeks to condemn all those who will not accept his perversion.

140. This is why it's so important for My called-out children to free themselves from this bondage, this repression. It's vital that you remain pure in heart—not in self-righteousness, but in embracing the pure truths of how I intended for life to be lived. It's important that you're not beguiled and contaminated by today's supposed enlightenment, but that you remain connected to the absolute facts of right and wrong.

141. But the world today seeks to repress this, and what they have called freedom of thought is in fact bondage. It is enslavement of the masses to the agenda of a few. The world has been browbeaten into acceptance of this sin, and it has even affected My Family. I know that there are those among you who even feel guilty or ashamed that the Family isn't more tolerant and open-minded about other "lifestyles." You must recognize that your lack of acceptance of this sin is not a flaw in you or in the Family, but the guilt or shame or pressure you feel to conform is evidence of the magnitude of Satan's plan to entrap and control the minds of men.

142. People the world over kowtow to the homosexual agenda, when in their hearts they also find this sin repulsive. Those who are themselves afflicted with this disease of spirit are allowing themselves to be tools of the Enemy to promote his ungodliness. They become puppets in the hand of the Devil, who seeks above all to pervert what I have created and to cause man to stray as far from Me as possible.

143. Therefore, be not deceived! Shake loose from the bindings of what you think you “must be” and how you will be perceived. It is they who are misled, not you. You who hear My truth and obey it are those who are thinking clearly and rationally, and it is the deceived masses of the “free thinkers” who are in fact bound and united in one mind and one agenda—Satan’s!

144. You must return to the black-and-white simplicity of My truth. Some things are right and some things are wrong; this is true open-mindedness. To understand the mindsets and views of weak, corrupted men is easy; to open your mind to their doctrine is not hard. But to understand the infinitely more powerful truths of God requires a truly open mind. It is a more radical and far less accepted view these days to know that some things are right and some are wrong, than the milder viewpoint that everything is okay depending on where you’re coming from. You must get back to the absolute truth and standard that I created and ordained—not the distorted, neutral, “I’m right, you’re right, we’re all right because we’re doing what seems right in our own eyes.”

145. You shouldn’t even require an explanation. If I am against something, then so should you be. You shouldn’t have to be wondering about every angle and, “Why this?” and “Why that?” and “What about this case?” Why would you seek to misuse life? Haven’t I given you enough trees of freedom to eat of? Why would you justify or inquire into the Devil’s counterfeits? You must learn from your own history that started way back in the Garden of Eden that eating from forbidden trees does not bring happiness. Your mind will not be expanded by that fruit; it will be enslaved, and you will lose what is most precious of all—closeness to Me. This is not because I will remove Myself from you, but because you will remove yourself from Me by the choices you make and the attitudes you accept.

146. I am close to you. I love you and have died for you, yet the things that you

do and the lifestyles and mindsets you embrace can separate you from Me. Choosing to reject My truth and embrace the world’s morals leads to, as My Word says, “Not liking to retain God in your knowledge” (Rom. 1:28). To embrace the viewpoints and liberalism of modern man, you must reject the notion of an absolute God, One Who has clear ideas of right and wrong. You must choose to not retain Me in your knowledge if you want to accept the liberalism of the world, because these two things cannot coexist.

147. This is why the world today is more apostate than ever and is turning its back on Me as never before in history. Seemingly small choices to reject My morals and viewpoints on seemingly small issues build up to the point that I can no longer exist in the minds of men. Do you see why it is so important that My Family remains pure in spirit and undefiled by the attitudes of the world?

148. And because acceptance of homosexuality has become the acid test for supposed “acceptance” and “freedom of thought” in the world today, I must address it with you. It is abhorrent in My eyes that you would justify this sin and seek to accept it. It makes Me angry, because I so clearly see the Devil’s agenda. When he can deceive even My elect, this gives him great reason to gloat before Me, and I hate it. I hate it that you would allow yourselves to be deceived into thinking wrong is right and right is wrong. I hate it that you would think that you are more tolerant and open-minded by accepting the Devil’s sins, while closing your mind to and becoming less tolerant of My absolutes.

149. There is no excuse for this! You are here to fight against Satan and his works in all their forms, not to embrace them in any way. I don’t care if you feel that the way you think is a backlash against your upbringing—what you might call conservative, but which I call godly. I don’t care if you feel that this is a new generation that “thinks differently.” I don’t care what excuse you have, because it’s not good enough. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of

this life” (2Tim.2:4). “Touch not the unclean thing” (2Cor.6:17). “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2Cor.6:14). These scriptures make it clear that I am not for the coexistence of right and wrong. One must defeat and replace the other; the two cannot exist together.

150. So regardless of why you feel the way you do on this issue, there is only one answer: to fight to believe what My Word says is the truth, to choose to believe what I say is right and to reject what I say is wrong. I’m trying to purify your minds and to root out all the crap that the Enemy shoves into your heart and head when you “open your mind.” Stop opening your mind to the world and start opening your heart to Me. Start trying to accept some of My “hard sayings”—which actually require some real effort and true open-mindedness to embrace, because they go against the carnal mind and reasoning—and stop clinging to every little wind of doctrine that the world blows your way. I am a liberal God, but not when it comes to sin. The way of sin is death, destruction, pollution, pain, suffering and misery. What kind of Father would I be if I invited you to partake of that!?

151. You are living by My moral code, a lifestyle different than any other in history. There have been Christians who have come close to the understanding you have, but none who have had it so purely or completely. Of course, you still have lots to learn and you have by no means reached perfection or a perfect understanding of My truth, but you have come as close as man has come. Isn’t that a wonderful thought? Isn’t it a blessing to know that you live a lifestyle that is closer to godliness than has previously been achieved by any large group of people?

152. Because of this, things won’t always make sense to outsiders as to why you believe the way you do. Even you yourself might have questions at times, and need to look it up in My Words and settle it in your heart—whether coming to an understanding or trusting and obeying Me by faith even if you don’t fully understand.

153. People might not be able to understand why you can have sexual freedom within the Law of Love, and yet I am so hard on other sexual acts such as homosexuality. People will not understand how you can be liberal and conservative all at once. But do you know what? I don’t care. I don’t care how the world sees you, or if they can understand and accept it. I only care about giving you My truth, and I care about you being a daily example of living that truth in love. My sheep will hear My voice, and will follow. They don’t need a big explanation. They know it’s true, and they will be drawn to it.

154. It may seem strange that freedom of love and sex is right in My eyes while homosexuality is wrong. But I have said it, and so to you it must be so. Who cares if that’s a strange concept to the rest of the world? Who cares what they think? Who cares if they call you closed-minded and hate-filled bigots? That’s merely their defense mechanism to try to suppress those who don’t agree with them.

155. But you have something much more powerful on your side—love and pure truth! Those things within you will create a sample that will break through any names and labels of man, which will reveal to those willing to see the truth that true love can coexist with a strict sense of right and wrong. They will see that with God’s love you are able to fully love the sinner, yet hate his sin. That is a powerful testimony that shatters the minds of most carnal men and flips them out to either drop out and join you, or to hate you with a vengeance and persecute you.

156. But there is nothing whatsoever to be gained by neutrality and supposed tolerance. That does not set you apart; it merely makes you yet another puppet on the string, believing whatever popular opinion tells you to, even if it’s contrary to what I say is right or wrong. There is no benefit to being another dupe, allowing yourself to be swayed by the pressure of the Devil’s vocal minority. That will never win any friends nor make any enemies, it will just make you another neutral, standing for nothing, until one day you find

that you have picked a side after all—the wrong one.

157. If you can simply grasp the basic truth that, “We ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29), then you won’t have to constantly battle over each and every “hot point” or issue. You’ll simply look to My written Word or prophecy to obtain My viewpoint, and once you have it, you’ll strive to believe it and live accordingly. You won’t be swayed by whatever the “in thing” to think is, or whatever the world is saying. You’ll obey Me instead, and you’ll throw in your lot with Me, holding that if I say it, then that’s good enough for you. You believe Me and obey Me in all things.

158. That’s true freedom, My children. That’s true life. That’s the best way to live, where you can have the most freedom, the most liberal life, the most pleasure and pursuit of happiness. That’s where “unto the pure all things are pure” actually can work, because you’ll have erased the Devil’s crap from your life and you’ll have taken on My lifestyles, My mindset, My viewpoints, and you’ll be playing by the original rules of the game where everything was happy and free and pleasurable before it all got distorted.

159. Dabbling in the Enemy’s delusions isn’t going to take you there. Justifying his perversions isn’t going to make you a better, freer, more accepting, more loving person. It’s only going to trap you and pull you along a path that leads away from Me. I don’t want that for you, and I hope you don’t want that for yourself.

160. Wake up then, and realize that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. The attitudes you allow yourself to entertain will determine your outlook and stance on life. Do not compromise with evil. Every choice is a choice to be the Devil’s puppet or God’s child, and you have to wake up to that fact. Everything is one or the other, and even if it gets tricky sometimes, there’s always a right way.

161. I can help you to see those right ways if you’ll only let Me. I want each and

every one of you to grow closer to Me, and in so doing, to discover My true freedoms of love and happiness. Won’t you let Me bring you closer? Just make the right choices and it will happen. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.

In summary:

162. (Mama:) This message is a good one to read over and study again, because the Lord’s answer applies not just to the topic of homosexuality, but to many hot topics or controversial issues. We always have the choice to believe God—His Word, the way He’s leading, the standards He has established as right and wrong—or to go with popular opinion, the masses, what is considered “politically correct,” and on and on. It all boils down to belief in God’s Word, His wisdom, no matter how unaccepted it is by the world.

163. If you’re still struggling with feeling “closed-minded” for not being more accepting of homosexuality or because you’re not taking part in others of the world’s common sins and evils, it might be a good idea to ask for prayer for the Lord to renew your perspective and vision, and help you see things more as He does. Study the Word and build your faith and conviction on these topics. The Enemy is always trying to tear down your faith, so if you’re not consciously working to build it, it’s being weakened—just by virtue of living in the world at this time, and experiencing all that he has designed to destroy faith and spread his propaganda. Be wise to his tactics and strengthen your spirit! (Note: To understand why homosexuality is abhorrent to the Lord and why He condemned it, as well as why we should hate the sin but continue to love and witness to the sinner, please be sure to read through the “Dig deeper” references that follow. Thanks!)

Key promise:

164. Call on the keys of cleansing to be renewed in your faith and convictions, and washed clean of the impurities and compromises of the world.

Dig deeper:

- "Homosexuality—The Biblical Viewpoint," Christian Digest #7
- "Oh Lord, How Much Longer?" ML #2825:2–6, 9–47, 58–68, Lifelines 20
- "God Is No Respector of Persons," ML #2909:20–27, Lifelines 21
- "The Un-Cursed Sons of Ham," ML #2928:17–21, Lifelines 21
- "Mama's Memos, No.6," ML #3156:65–90, Lifelines 24
- "World Currents, No.88," ML #3175:40–59, GN 780
- "You Are What You Watch," ML #3182:12–15, 17, GN 787
- "Issues, Part 5," ML #3322:80–99, GN 925
- "Recognizing and Resisting Pan," ML #3401:7–20, 52–59, 65–69

Challenging That:

165. (Jesus:) When I say that you're called to be different, I don't just mean a little bit different or a little bit out of the ordinary. I mean so radical, so different, so completely polar to the rest of the world that you will shock and disturb the sleepy Systemites. You will scare them, frighten them, unsettle them, and cause them to be repulsed and astonished at how vastly different you are to them. They will never understand you. You need to learn to take pleasure in that, revel in it, and enjoy the freedom that their small minds can never comprehend.



166. (Jesus:) If you think that you can compromise now, but in the days to come you'll be able to flip a mental switch and all of a sudden develop a hatred for the System and the Antichrist and the Devil's regime, you're wrong. Your attitudes in the Endtime are determined by your attitudes today. If you're compromising now, you're likely to compromise then. You may think you would never do so, but the fact is that you are already living in the time of the End, and the way you are living now is determining your choices in the future.

(Mama:) Even though sodomy is a sin, the homosexual himself is a human being who can be delivered, and whom Jesus loves and wants to rescue. I'm well aware of the fact that Dad has expressed very strong feelings against the sin of sodomy. But I have seen him sit with people who were afflicted by sodomite spirits and lovingly witness to them, listening to their heartcry, sharing encouragement from the Word, and showing understanding of their problem.

So it's very important that we understand and teach this differentiation between the sin and the sinner. This same principle applies to all the criminals in the prisons where we minister. No matter how great their crime, Jesus will forgive it if they will just come to Him. He offers His love to "whosoever believeth in Him!"

When you start putting more emphasis on damning the sin than loving the sinner, watch out! What won you to Jesus? Was it seeing your sins exposed one by one and being told you were "a filthy rotten sinner"? Were you belittled and criticized and condemned for all of the wrong you had done? Or were you told it didn't matter what you had done; there was a wonderful loving Father Who loved you so much that He was willing to pay any price—the greatest price of all—to make a place by His side for you in Heaven where you could be forever happy and at peace with Him. Remember, "God commendeth (demonstrates) His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!" (Rom.5:8).

If people have to be free of their sins before we can love them, who will there be to love? If we start judging people on the basis of their

sins, who is going to stand? “If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand!” (Psa.130:3). We’re all hopeless without God’s love, and that’s the only thing that can save us.

It’s true that as God’s prophets we must warn the world of the evil, we must tell the world of its sins, we must warn them to repent, we must prophesy God’s judgments. However, while God preaches hatred of the sin, He shows great love for the individual sinner, just as He did for each of us.

We have to be very careful that we don’t mix up the sin with the sinner and speak of the people themselves disparagingly, without making it clear that it is the sin we’re talking about and not the poor people. Since we are God’s Family of Love, trying to show His love to the world, we’d better be very careful that we don’t give the opposite impression. (From “God Is No Respector of Persons,” ML #2909:20–24, 27, Lifelines 21.)



167. (Jesus:) Never forget, My loves, My called-out and chosen ones, the very great love and desire I have for each of My lost children to experience My love personally. You are My hands, My eyes, My feet, for them. Won’t you love them with My love?—Love them enough to witness to them, to speak the truth in love when I lead you, to empathize with them, to pray for them, to do all these things so that I might love them out of the hell they’re in, and into My heaven of peace and forgiveness and healing? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. If you find yourself looking down on them in pride and self-righteousness, then you have committed the greater sin.

Going by Past Experience Above the Word

The issue:

168. (Mama:) Some people look at their past experience, or what they feel they’ve “learned” in life, and think that they know better than the Word. It’s sort of an attitude of, “Well, I know that the Word says such-and-such, but I’ve learned this in my life, so I sort of know better.” Or, “I know the Word says such-and-such, but I found that it didn’t really work....”

God’s mind on the matter:

169. (Jesus:) You can’t build on any other foundation than My Words and expect your building to stand. You can’t base the decisions you make or the counsel you give to others on your own life experience or past incidents alone. If you do, you’re just setting yourself up for failure, because it’s the wrong foundation. Your building may even endure for quite a while, but sooner or later a wave will come along and topple it because it’s not built on the rock of My Word. You’ll experience failure, loss, heartache, and mistakes as a result of building on the sand of your own opinions.

170. I’m addressing the issue of some people basing their advice or attitudes on what they feel they’ve learned in life, and using their “experience” to contradict the Word. Some people say, “Well, I know that the Word says such-and-such, but I’ve learned so-and-so in my life, so I know better,” or, “This is how it really is.” Anyone who’s doing that is either setting themselves up for big-time failure and disappointment or they’re just not applying the Word in the right way.

171. My Word is truth. What My Word says, goes, and will be the right way to behave or act. However, My Word is also very broad, and you must apply the right Word to the right situation. You have to be Spirit-led, you have to be open to My New Wine, you have to be open to direct revelation, and the many other ways to discern My will. So if someone says

that the Word indicates a certain direction, but they've learned from experience that it's better to go the opposite way, they're mistaken. They may be overlooking or ignoring some aspect of My Word, or going by their natural reasoning rather than My Word, or they may think they know better than Me. Whatever the case, they're forgetting or ignoring the fact that My ways are higher than their ways, and that even though there may be a way that seems right unto a man, if it's not My way, it's the wrong way.

172. The experiences you have in life are good training in how to apply the Word, how to find the right Word for the right situation, and how it helped you. Rather than saying that you've learned to go against the Word, you might just need to admit that you need to learn how to apply the right Word at the right time, and sense My directions more clearly. I have an answer for every situation you face, and I will give it to you and help you apply My Word correctly, if you will ask. But if you lean to your own understanding, it's very easy to make a mess of things, because at different times My counsel will be very different—sometimes even opposite.

173. It's like the famous example in Proverbs where one is instructed in the same chapter to “answer not a fool” and also to “answer a fool” (Pro.26:4–5). There are different instructions for different situations. The things you learn in life will help you learn how to get the most out of the Word, but they should never teach you contrary to the Word. Sometimes it might take a while for you to see the fulfillment of My Word in your situation, but My Word never fails.

174. So if you think you've had personal experiences that have taught you a lesson that is other than what the Word says, why don't you ask Me about that situation. Ask Me to help you see if, while it may have been contrary to a certain clause in the Word, it fits exactly with counsel that I've given somewhere else. I'm a moving and changing God, and while the foundation is sure, there are many applications for each individual situation you face. True experience and true wisdom will not teach you contrary

to the Word. The Word is the one thing that you can count on. Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My Words will never pass away!

In summary:

175. (Mama:) The Word gives counsel for many different situations and scenarios, and when you apply it, you really need to seek the Lord and ask Him to help you be wise and in tune with Him and apply it correctly. If you haven't seen the Word fulfilled in your life, or you've had past experiences that you feel contradict the Word, maybe you have been applying the Word incorrectly. For every situation, the Lord has an answer, and His Word stands true regardless of the changing and shifting circumstances in our lives. Sometimes it just takes a while to see the fulfillment of the promises and consequences the Lord promises in His Word. But we can know they will come. They are sure.

176. Thank God we can base our lives on His Word and trust that things will work out! Imagine the poor people of the world who are ignorant of the spiritual principles and instruction of the Word, and have to make their big decisions based on guesswork or what they think is right, hoping that things will work out!

Key promise:

177. The keys will open unto you the good treasure of My Word; they will enhance your spiritual hunger, they will feed your faith, they will instruct you in how to apply it, and it will come alive to you.

Dig deeper:

- “On Guard,” ML #1377:6–8, 43–45, 67–78, GN Book 3
- “Heavenly Communication,” ML #1957:22–31, DB 8
- “Self-Righteousness,” ML #2140:39–52, DB 8
- “Talents and Gifts, Strengths and Weaknesses,” ML #2557:14–22, Lifelines 19
- “What Is Strong?” ML #2559:8–23, Lifelines 19

- "Hearing from the Lord Step by Step," ML #3149:15–40, 67–70, Lifelines 24
- "Quiet Time—Your Lifesaver," ML #3183:26–41, GN 788
- "The Weakness Revolution, Part 3," ML #3219:88–95, GN 821

Challenging Thot:

178. (Jesus:) There's nothing I won't do for you, My loves, My radical, dropped-out, beautiful brides! So if there's something you're struggling with in your past or present that you just can't seem to come to grips with, put Me on the spot! Claim My promises, fulfill the conditions, and then watch Me do the miracle! There's nothing stopping you—except maybe a little pride or unyieldedness or maybe unwillingness to accept that My will is often different from your will. But if you can come to grips with that, if you can truly say, "Not my will, but Yours be done," then you're in line for some mighty miracles, some real changes, some forward motion in the right direction!

179. (Jesus:) A lot of the steps I'm asking people to take these days seem difficult, grievous, and painful, especially at first. But I'm demanding that those who really want to be disciples live the discipleship life fully, and as they start (as those who have already started have found), they will be blessed, happy, at peace, and successful.

Discuss or Pray?

The issue:

180. (Mama:) I've heard that there is often debate among you regarding Home meetings. The question is whether to pray first and ask the Lord what to do and thereby bypass discussion, or whether to discuss first and weigh up the pros and cons before going to the Lord.

181. Those of you who take the stance of praying first and just asking the Lord don't see the point in discussing matters at length, and then after you've hashed over things and everyone has more or less made up their minds as to what they think should be done, finally praying about it. You feel you should pray and ask the Lord what to do, then listen to His counsel and do what He says—simple! You don't think you should put off praying and hearing from the Lord until after you've discussed things in full; you feel that the Lord can tell you right off what to do, end of discussion.

182. You of the second opinion want to go the "discuss first" route, and then pray. When this happens, those of the first opinion tend to get frustrated with having to sit in oftentimes long meetings, waiting, listening, and hearing people share their views, sometimes quite strongly, when you could just hear from the Lord and do what He says. Some of you are confused as to what is the right thing to do.

God's mind on the matter:

183. (Jesus:) You've outlined the two extremes here. There are those who want to leave all the decisions to Me, who only want to hear from Me and do what I say, and then there are those who want to discuss it all, reach conclusions, and then come to Me for My approval. The truth lies somewhere in between.

184. Remember how David said, "Learning, learning, learning—it never ends! I love it!" That is one of the primary reasons you are on earth. It is your education time, and one of the things that is of prime importance is learning to make decisions. I, of course, know what the best decision is in any situation, but I have set it up so you have to weigh out matters and come to a conclusion, make decisions. I will give you guidance, and if you're smart you will come to Me often throughout your decision-making to see if you're on the right track, but in the end, because of the majesty of choice that you have, you must make the decision.

185. I encourage the discussion and counseling process. As a Home or committee or board you need to discuss things and reach united or at

least majority decisions. You need to go through the process, and while you're doing that, you learn to see many aspects and sides of the situation. You get to hear others' opinions, you get to weigh the pros and cons, and you come to a conclusion. All that is good and necessary. It also helps you to learn about others in your Home or on your board, how they think, what their preferences are, and it helps draw out the quiet ones and hopefully put a check on the more outspoken.

186. This discussion period can also be a platform to help you formulate additional questions that you may need to ask Me, and this is a very important part of the process. It's important to ask Me the right questions, and getting everyone's input will help you formulate well-rounded questions.

187. So the discussion process plays an important part in your decision-making. Everyone may not agree with the conclusion, but at least you've been able to participate and you hear each other's point of view. All this is good. You have to look at what you can gain not only from reaching a decision, but also from what you go through in the process. You have gained insight into others and you have hopefully gained more love and understanding.

188. You see, to Me, the process and the lessons you learn from working together, bending to the will of the majority, preferring others, and the unity that should come as a result, is as important as the decisions you arrive at. If you just say, "Lord, You make the decision," well, I understand that you mean well in wanting to turn things over to Me, but if you go this route, you're missing out on some of the lessons that I want you to learn while on earth.

189. This does not nullify what I said in "Ask Me Everything." I do want you to consult Me. If I am left out of things, you won't make the right choices. I will help guide you to the right decisions, but I don't want to make the decisions for you. This is shirking your responsibility. You are there to make choices, and with My input and the input of others, you will make the right ones. Both are needed.

190. Here is a brief outline of the process of arriving at the right decisions in your

meetings, whether Home meetings, board meetings, or any others you hold:

191. 1) First of all, you have to commit your ways to Me. You should begin every meeting with prayer, present the situation to Me, seek My guidance, and ask Me to lead you in your discussions. At the opening of a meeting, it's also important to open yourselves up to listen to Me. Ask Me for whatever I have to tell you. This doesn't necessarily have to be long, but if you ask for whatever I want to say to you at the start, then be still and listen, I will give you what is most needed at the time. Sometimes it will be a word of encouragement and a green light to proceed; other times I might have interesting facts or tips to give you at the beginning of the meeting, which will help your time together to be more fruitful, or I may interject something into the equation that you weren't thinking about, but that is important to factor into your discussion. So please be open to this very important step in the overall process.

192. 2) You then proceed with discussing the matter prayerfully, which means looking to Me and listening to Me, as well as listening to everyone else. This may have to go on for quite a while so that everyone who wants to has a chance to contribute, as you continue to weigh things up with My Word and with Me. You can look up practical counsel in the pubs on how to conduct meetings. If you're finding that your meetings are too long and drawn out, try different approaches to help keep them in check, possibly putting a time limit on each speaker, following a preplanned agenda, etc. This will help your meetings to flow in an orderly and productive manner.

193. 3) During the discussion, matters may come up that you need to ask Me about. If so, take a break to pray and get My mind on the matter, then come together again to discuss what I said. Finally, when your discussions are finished, draw your conclusions and then vote on the proposals.

194. 4) Next, bring it to Me and get My final confirmation, or further comments from Me on your decision. This can be done by hearing from Me unitedly right then and there, or by

assigning individuals to hear from Me. Then if I endorse your decision, you can go with it; or if I bring up some other aspects for you to consider, you have to put that into the equation and readjust your decision accordingly if needed.

195. Some of you might think this four-step process is a waste of time. If I have all the answers, then why not just come to Me and let Me tell you straight out what to do? At times this is necessary, but in the majority of situations this would be like having the teacher take the test for the student. This is not the purpose of your existence. This would be like cutting the end off the cocoon so the butterfly can emerge without a struggle. You might not feel you have time for the struggle, but you will emerge stunted if you skip it.

196. I am very interested in the decisions and choices you make. I want to see what you're made of and what you're making of yourself. I'm also interested in you learning to be a team. I want you to be united, a tight team, and you arrive at this by learning about the others in your Home, learning to be understanding of them, learning to help and be helped by one another. These are all important parts of your life and training, and you can't skimp on the process and cut to the chase by asking Me to make all your decisions. This is not the purpose of life.

197. However, if you insist on banging out your decisions on your own anvil and then only come to Me for a cursory signing on the dotted line at the end of the contract, you will go astray. Let Me be your Coach and Advisor throughout life.

198. If you come to Me right at the beginning of your decision-making process, I will set you on the right path. On a rare occasion I may cut to the chase and tell you exactly what to do. Sometimes there are emergencies and the right decision needs to be made quickly. When this is the case, I will tell you. But in the majority of cases I will begin by getting you headed in the right direction through giving you some important things to keep in mind.

199. Once you have prayerfully discussed and provisionally decided what to do, and you

are pretty sure your decision is the right one, you can check it out again with Me and get My final confirmation, or adjustments if needed. If a substantial amount of time elapses between the decision being ratified by Me and its implementation, you would be wise to check in with Me again before applying it.

In summary:

200. (Mama:) In your meetings it's important to pray first, hear from the Lord, discuss, then pray again and receive the Lord's final confirmation on your decisions. It's important to get the Lord's general direction at the beginning of your meetings, but He'll rarely give all the answers at the start, because discussing and counseling together is part of the decision-making process and part of our training.

201. The Lord encourages the discussion and counseling process because it has many benefits. It helps you to see more sides of a situation, to weigh the pros and cons, and to come to a conclusion. It helps you to formulate well-rounded questions to ask the Lord if and when necessary. In the process you learn more about others, how they think, what their preferences are, and this helps you to understand each other. Taking this time to pray, discuss, and counsel together helps to draw out the quieter souls and serves as a check and balance to the outspoken.

202. There is much more to gain from the entire process than only arriving at a decision. You gain insight, great love, understanding, and tighter unity. You learn invaluable lessons on working together, yieldedness, and preferring others, to name a few. You still need to consult the Lord; He is your Coach and Advisor. At the same time, He has purposely set up this process and it's an important part of our lives and training.

Key promise:

203. Depend on the keys of wisdom, insight, communication, and unity as you discuss and counsel together, and I will help you reach wise decisions.

(Dad:) When we don't make our own choices we're shrinking from our job and our own responsibility and the main purpose for which we were placed here, and that is to make choices, to make decisions in the Lord and under His guidance so that He will see what we will do or what we will choose or decide. ("Naming the Baby," ML #338:10, Vol.3).

Dig deeper:

- "Understanding Prophecy, Part 4," ML #3343:44–51, GN 937
- "The Board Vision, Part 3," ML #3387:188–191, 196–197, 200, GN 983
- "Board Vision Training Videos" (Post-it Letters): Part 3, ML #3408:3,4,7; Part 4, ML #3409:11–14; Part 6, ML #3411:22–42

Challenging Thot:

204. (Dad:) Making decisions is what life's all about. God purposely will not always give you outright revelations to help you make decisions. That would be cutting corners. He'd be shortchanging you if He did that, depriving you of important lessons in life. But He has given you something invaluable to aid you in the decision-making process. He's promised you wisdom and the leading of His Spirit. If you depend on Him and arrive at decisions this way, and keep following Him until He tells you to do something different, you can't go wrong. Pray, and let the Lord lead your discussions and counsel together, and you'll be safe. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Pro.11:14).

Discouragement During the Renewal

The Issue:

205. (Mama:) Many of you are facing some of the biggest battles in your lives during this

time of renewal. Some of you are discouraged, because in the natural you tend to think that when you get yourselves right with the Lord, or at least you're in the process of doing so, your battles should diminish, not grow stronger. You feel like, "What's the use? Why go through the renewal if it just means bigger battles?" which you dread.

God's mind on the matter:

206. (Jesus:) It has been often pointed out to you that discouragement is the Devil's favorite weapon. So if you're getting hit with it, then you must realize that you're in a battle. You don't just say, "Ouch, that hurts!" and run away. What type of soldier is that? I'll tell you what type: It's a dead soldier, because the Enemy will cut you down from behind when you do that.

207. I want you to get this firmly settled in your mind and heart: Discouragement is the Devil fighting you. It is a deadly weapon that he is trying to kill you with. You must fight back! You must take up the weapons I've given you and fight back. You've had enough time to get to know your weapons—now you need to use them, every one of them, or your head is going to end up on the wall in the Devil's trophy room!

208. There's no getting around it—you're in a battle and you have to fight! You must fight for your life with all you've got, for all you're worth! You can't just wander off the battlefield and go sulk in a corner, feeling sorry for yourself that you're getting hurt and that fighting is such hard work. Satan's marauders will find you there and cut you down. But if you fight and keep on fighting, you'll be a winner!

209. You are ordained to win. That is your destiny. You are not a loser. You can only lose if you stop fighting and give up. There is always strength available to you to keep fighting. I have never failed in one of My good promises of power. You are unbeatable if you don't give up!

210. You must look at increased battles as a sign that you're succeeding. If the battles have intensified, it's because you're gaining ground and the Devil is trying everything he can to stop you. He is a born loser, but he keeps

trying. He doesn't give up without a fight. You, however, are born winners, so that's all the more reason why you shouldn't give up.

211. I know you're only human, and I have compensated for that by giving you spiritual weapons and the means to use them. A weapon does no good if it's just a decoration that hangs by your side. It has to be in hand. And if it is an offensive weapon, you have to be firing it, and you have to be aiming it at the right place! If it's a defensive weapon, you have to hold it up to deflect the return fire. You already know how to do all these things, but sometimes you forget.

212. I've been promoting unity more lately, because this is one of the best ways to increase your power. United with your brethren you are an even greater force. You are unbeatable with Me alone, but it can get pretty lonely and tiring when you don't have a buddy, or a lot of them, to fight alongside you. All the best generals down through the ages knew the best way to fight was to have the army coordinated. Small armies won massive victories over big armies when they fought as a united force. It's happened time after time.

213. Discouragement is one of the most insidious weapons the Devil uses, because in a way, it's comforting for you to accept. Discouragement starts off by making you feel sorry for yourself—and human nature likes this sympathy. It makes you feel good. You feel that you deserve to feel that way, that it's your right to feel that way. But then once it has weaseled its way in past your defenses, it will hit you like a ton of bricks, and before you know it, you feel like doing yourself in! You're ready to throw in the towel and jump off a bridge! Can't you see how wicked an attack that is and how much you should resist it and not even let it get started?

214. You may wonder, "Why even bother fighting or going through the renewal if it means an increase in battles?"—Because it is not all an increase in battles; there are multitudes of benefits from the renewal! You must come to grips with the fact that there is no discharge from the spiritual warfare. That's the way it is, and nothing you can do will change it. You

may think the dead ducks don't have battles to fight, but in reality they are already dead and are about to become lunch. They will suffer, some for eternity. But that's not your fate. You are overcomers, and you will be victors if you don't give up!

215. Rise up and fight back! Claim your destiny and fight back for all you're worth, and I guarantee you will win. I can win any battle as long as you let Me in to do the fighting for you, by using the weapons I have given you. And here's the greatest incentive of all to keep fighting, and why it pays to go through the renewal even if it means increased battles: With bigger battles come greater victories, and there's nothing like the thrill of triumph it brings! So come on, fighters! Fight your way through and win and share in the rewards.



216. (Jesus:) Battles should encourage you, because battles mean you're on the right track. You don't see blessings as I see them. You see the purges and tests you go through as a curse. The battles you face are not a curse; they are a blessing. They are your helpers, because fighting battles is the only way you will become stronger, tougher, better fighters and conquerors. Battles strengthen you! They shape you and mold you and make you into what I want you to be. Without battles, there can be no growth. There is no standing still; without battles you're going backwards.

217. I allow battles in your lives because I want you to move forward. I'm training you to be My special forces—those who will face down the Enemy, who trust Me explicitly, who wield My power and champion My cause without fear; those who show others the joy of fighting without reservation, who fight and overcome and conquer all.

218. Without the battles, you wouldn't discover the awesome power of the weapons I've given you, for you would have no incentive to learn how to use them to the full. You're at a crucial point in not only Family history, but in world history. You stand on the brink of great success or great failure. You're destined to win, but you will only win if you

keep fighting the battles and learn to relish the fight as David taught you.

219. I'm giving you more, trusting you with more, and toughening you up, because I need the best to ride with Me in the final battle! The war is not over until we've gained all the ground. You'll never stop fighting battles, but this shouldn't discourage you, it should encourage you! Because as you fight and win, you'll never stop gaining victories, you'll keep going forward and making progress, you'll keep growing. You won't fall back and fade into oblivion. You won't go down in defeat, but you will keep rising to meet every challenge that is before you.

220. The battles are not going away, because you need them, and this is reason to give thanks. The only way you're going to be able to take over the world, the only way you will be able to rule and reign with Me, is to keep fighting the battles, keep overcoming, and keep winning!

221. Battles are good; they are toughening you up and preparing you to rule the world! Let them encourage you to look forward and up to heights you're soon to attain if you keep fighting, keep claiming the keys, keep wielding your new weapons, keep winning, keep going on to victory after victory, and don't quit!

In summary:

222. (Mama:) Discouragement is the Devil's favorite weapon, and if he's aiming it at you—attacking you with thoughts of, “What's the use? The renewal is just bringing on more battles; this is too hard!”—then you need to stand up and fight back!

223. Battles equal good. Fighting battles is what our lives are all about. We should be thankful for battles, because they're a sign of the Lord's blessing. They keep us growing, progressing, and moving forward. If we didn't have battles, we wouldn't learn to fully use our new weapons.

224. The Lord is training us to be His special forces. The battles we fight today are preparing us to rule the world tomorrow. With greater battles come greater victories, glorious triumph, and greater rewards.

Key promise:

225. The keys of spiritual warfare will help you to fight the battles. They will move you to action, keep you on the ball, close to Me, praying, working, fighting and conquering the Enemy.

Dig deeper:

- “Dumps,” ML #33:9–23, 25–31, DB 4
- “Old Bottles,” ML #242:8–9, Vol.2
- “Greater Victories,” ML #727, DB 1
- “Faithful Servants,” ML #1373:61, GN Book 5
- “God's Chess Game,” ML #1951:13,18,25–27, Vol.16
- “How to Overcome Discouragement,” ML #2750:14–23, 30–37, DB 11
- “Problems and Solutions, Part 4,” ML #3072:105–117, 121–141
- FJWL 1: #76, 79, 132, 181, 312
- FJWL 2: #93, 251, 427, 453

Challenging Thots:

226. (Dad:) Never give in to a sense of futility, hopelessness, and defeat. But if you do, fight on in spite of how you feel. This is the creed of the fighter!



227. (Dad:) This is war! You're at war with the Devil and his forces—his lies and strongholds in the hearts and minds of men! This is an army and you're soldiers. Soldiers fight battles. It's a war of the worlds! You're fighting on the side of the One Who is right, and when you're fighting for the right, you don't mind the battle. You relish the fight! You enjoy the challenge and the chance to show your key-powered strength!

228. Give me fighters who love to wield their new weapons, who enjoy defeating Satan and his hinderers, and who know they can't lose because they are following the right Commander, they're on the winning side, and they hold the keys that cannot fail! Give me soldiers who love to fight the good fight of faith—overcomers, conquering heroes who like to fight for the Lord, their brethren, and the truth!