

BLADE

ISSUE 17



Come on a Hike!

"I'm taking you there because it's one of My favorite places, and I want to share it with you."

Come, I want to show you something. It'll take us a little while to get there, but I promise the view will be worth it. I want to climb a mountain with you. Come on, you can do it. It's not that difficult, you know.

We're on a beautiful and scenic forest trail. There's the smell of fresh pine in the air. Squirrels are darting back and forth among the trees. We follow this trail for some time, talking about all kinds of things. I tell you about how much I loved climbing mountains when I was on Earth. There were a lot of hills in Galilee, and I loved to get up early and walk across those mountains, with the grass tickling My bare feet and the warmth of the rising sun hitting My face.

We're not going to a big, tall, cold, icy mountain, though those are majestic in their own way. For now we're going to have a picnic on a mountain pasture, right beside a lake. There's a waterfall too. The water comes down from the high mountain, cold and fresh and clear and pure, and drops down a small cliff right into the lake. I'm taking you there because it's one of My favorite places, and I want to share it with you.

Here we are. I take off My backpack and spread out a blanket that was rolled up on top of it. You take off your



shoes, sit down on the blanket, and rub your feet, which are a little sore from the climb. I take off My Own shoes, and stand up, and pull you up too.

I'm pulling you onto the grass, so you can feel the way it tickles your feet. You laugh at the sensation. It feels good, doesn't it?

After running around a short while on the grass, you wipe the sweat off your forehead. You didn't know it could get so hot this high up on a mountain. I'm already pulling off My shirt and pants, and I have My swimming trunks on underneath. That's right—I'm going swimming! The water's fresh and clear, and it feels so good once you get in. Come on, join Me! That's right. Doesn't the water feel great? It's enough to make anybody feel like a new person.

We emerge from the water, feeling refreshed and renewed. Now we've *really* worked up a hearty appetite, and we enjoy our picnic like we've never seen food before. The view is spectacular and we feel as though we're on top of the world. Aren't you glad you came along?

Groom Your Inner Man

"Have you ever noticed that someone you consider very lovely or handsome will marry someone who seems at first glance to be rather plain?"

You're good at your scholastics and you're responsible in your Home. You work hard and make sure that you do each ministry the best you can. But you're also young. Your body is still growing and you're feeling kind of lanky and awkward. Maybe you've got straggly or super-curly hair, you feel that you just don't look good with all those freckles, or that you're not as big and strong as some of the other boys in your Home.

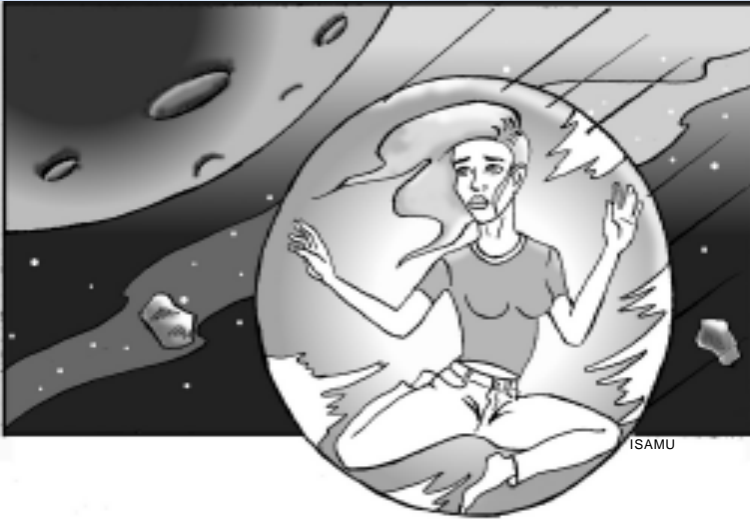
What's more, there's this girl you like, and you really want her to like you, but you feel so inadequate physically. You see the other guys around you and you feel they've got so much more going for them, and that she'll never notice you.

It's difficult, isn't it? But I just want to let you know that physical appearance has very *little* to do with *true* love. Have you ever noticed that someone you consider very lovely or handsome will marry someone who seems at first glance to be rather plain? That's because when it comes down to true love, wise people choose those who have *inner* depth. They recognize those who are beautiful on the *inside*—unselfish and caring and mature and loving.

If someone's heart is empty, or filled with shallowness and worldly clutter, then good looks aren't going to get him or her very far with real people. Good looks fade, but it is the inner man that remains.

The kind of person I need you to be is someone who really loves Me, someone who is willing to serve Me, someone who is loving and willing to help out. That's the best kind of person a girl or a guy could ever love, and those who are smart will catch on to that fact. So even if you don't think you've got "it" physically, you can sure have "it" inside—and that's what matters most.





Collision Course!

"Once upon a time you thought you were on a safe orbit ... But now everything is out of control."

The night is dark and completely quiet. Everything is still. You're hurtling through empty space—a planet without a course—traveling so fast that you know it's only a matter of time before you collide with something bigger. There are stars twinkling in the sky, but they have no words for you.—They're millions of miles away. The only company you have is the yawning blackness around you—dense, silent, and unfeeling.

Once upon a time you thought you were on a safe orbit—surrounded by fellow planets, charting a course, and supported by the pull of gravity. Your world was safe; your routine was sure. But now everything is out of control. There's too much fear and confusion for tears.—No one would see them anyway.

Have you ever felt like this? Maybe you feel like a planet hurtling out of control this very minute. Everything on the outside of

you looks normal and fine, but inside your mind and your spirit you feel like you're going a million miles an hour, about to crash and explode any minute.

Help is on the way. See those lights in the distance? Maybe you thought they were stars, until you notice they have a specific formation. It looks like a glowing planet until you realize, as it gets

closer, that it's an orb made up of white beings of light. The orb is headed straight for you, and you brace for impact. But no, you open your eyes and find the orb *surrounding* you. These beings are protecting you. They are sent by Me to make sure you don't crash, to help you gradually reduce your speed, and to guide you back to the orbit I've set for you.

On your way back you do collide with an asteroid that



jumps into your path out of nowhere. There is a great explosion and a fireball, and pieces of rock fly everywhere—but they're not from your planet. It was the asteroid that exploded, as soon as it hit your protective orb of beings.

Remember, little planet, I'm always looking out for you. My protective orb is just a prayer away.

"You are one of My disciples, and just as I am concerned about putting your parents in a pleasant and fruitful place where they will feel needed and fulfilled, so I am taking your needs into consideration."



Forge Ahead Despite Your Limitations!

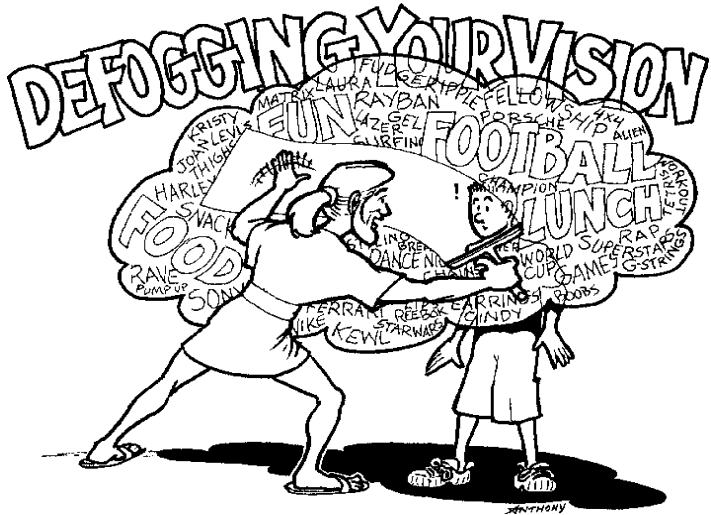
My dear buddy, thanks for keeping your heart soft for Me. Thanks for trying out the new weapons, and for trying your best to practice with them. All those little efforts you make mean a lot to Me, and every time you obey the Word and take those little steps forward, I can bless you a little more.

I know it's tough. On the one hand I'm telling you to forge ahead, to learn the new weapons; I'm telling you that you're not too young to love Me with all your heart and to serve Me. Yet on the other hand, you still have limitations. You don't have the [Charter's] right of mobility yet, you're still living with your parents, and sometimes you just want to be free to go where I lead you and explore all the possibilities of service for Me.

Just remember what pleases Me most: sharing My love with others in whatever way you can. I want you to pray that I will guide you to places where you can serve Me as much as possible. Prayer can open doors that nothing else can open, so it's up to you to exercise that weapon too. I have opportunities, not just for you but for your parents too. Pray that they will hear My voice clearly as I show them where to go next. You're still going to be with them for a while, so pray that I will fill all your needs.

Your parents have needs too: They need to feel fulfilled in their service for Me, and they want to be used. They've served Me for a long time, and sometimes they wonder if their usefulness is running out. But it's not, and I promise that I have new places to take you all, places that will fill their needs and yet also fill your unique needs.

I don't just consider you "one of the kids," who doesn't matter much and whose needs aren't important. On the contrary, you are one of My disciples, and just as I am concerned about putting your parents in a pleasant and fruitful place where they will feel needed and fulfilled, so I am taking your needs into consideration. You're an important factor, and as you pray and strive to move forward, I can count you worthy and I can then provide more opportunities, exciting new fields, and even new ministries.



"Ask Me what things you can do for fun and excitement, and see if I can't tell you some cool things about that!"

I know sometimes you feel that all this talk about "living the Heavenly vision" is just hype. Maybe you've never been able to picture Heaven, or keep the concept of "eternal rewards waiting for you" in your mind for longer than a few seconds. Off your mind flies to more earthly, temporal things—what you're going to have for lunch, the upcoming soccer game, next week's dance night, your boyfriend or girlfriend, or whether you're looking cool enough these days. I understand that it's hard to keep your mind on what's to come. You've been hearing about it for so long—since the minute you were born, it feels like sometimes—and *still* you don't see any tangible proof of it. You want to live life for *now*, and not have to worry so much about what's to

come.

Sometimes you wonder why you can't just have fun now. You wonder why your present actions have to be dictated by whether it's good for later, or if it's going to be worthwhile once you get to Heaven. All the adults seem to be so concerned about "later" that they keep you from enjoying *now*, you think. That's tough to come to grips with.

Having fun is very important to you.—It often feels like the *most* important thing. On top of that, sometimes you get to feeling bad about always wanting to have fun, and not being able to stay focused on more spiritual things. You wonder, "Why can't I keep the Heavenly vision?

Why doesn't it stick or seem to make much sense to me?" You figure that maybe you're just not cut out for this life, because you're not able to be "good" or "spiritual" enough.

I'll tell you how to deal with this battle you're going through: Don't worry about trying to see things just the same as the adults. Just decide that you're going to believe that there *is* a Heavenly vision to strive for. Don't throw these truths away just because you feel they don't gel with you. Accept these things as best you can, and in time I'll help them to stick in your mind.

For right now, do your best to read the

Word, ask Me to guide you and speak to you in your daily life, and trust Me for the rest. If you don't feel spiritual enough, don't sweat it. Do what you can, and I'll bring you along. Start by asking Me how I can be part of your fun. Ask Me what things you can do for fun and excitement, and see if I can't tell you some cool things about that!

Talking to Me all the time and asking Me what I think about things is a key to understanding things that don't make sense to you right now. But don't worry about it or beat yourself up over it. Just hang in there, and in time you'll see things clearer and will be glad you waited out the fog.

No! I don't want
to look out again.
I only saw mud!



Shondo!

"You have a
choice to see the
mud in life, or to
look up and see
My *stars*."

Two men look out from prison bars—one sees the mud, the other sees the stars.

You're feeling frustrated, so you whisper a four-letter-word under your breath. You've seen people in movies who use that word when they're frustrated with something. There are also other expletives* that in System lingo convey anger, disgust, and frustration. (*Expletive: an exclamation or oath, especially one that is profane, vulgar, or obscene.)

You might even wonder why as Christians you *shouldn't* use that kind of language—after all, it's not like you're taking in harmful substances, and you're not damning anyone to *Hell* with those words. You know that I love you, and that *you're* not going to go to Hell for using those words either. "So what's the big deal?" you say.

I'll tell you, then. You're confined to your physical body, and compared to My spirit world of freedom and love, the earth is a bit like a prison! You're "stuck" there in a sense, till it's your time to get out. There are all sorts of people on Earth, and they're all confined to their bodies as well. But even though the earth is far less than perfect, even though you have problems and frictions with others, and you experience aches and pains and limitations in your physical bodies, you have a

choice to make. You have a choice to see the *mud* in life, or to look up and see My stars.

I've shown you so *many* stars!—There are so many far-out things in My Word to help you to look forward to Heaven, to know how to be happy in this life through loving and living for others, and even to know how to share that hope of Heaven with other people. But if you act like all you're seeing is *mud*—by using System swear words in your conversation—then the worldlings you witness to might have a hard time believing that you're any different from them.

After all, they might think, If Heaven is so wonderful and the King of Heaven can bring peace and happiness into people's lives even now, on Earth, how come you're talking just like we do? They're going to wonder why you're letting all those muddy words—words that convey anger, dissatisfaction, and disgust—come out of your mouth, if you have a different view of life than they do.

Do you get it now, why it's so important to keep your conversation pure? Also, using those words regularly leaves you

very little room for praising Me in trying times. You can't be thinking or saying "[Expletive,] what a bummer that didn't work out!" at the same time as you're saying, "Oh well, praise the Lord, You know best, Jesus! We know that even though this fun idea didn't work out like we hoped, that You're in total control and are looking out for us!" I'll give you one guess which of those two attitudes makes Me happy and brings down My blessings.

Words are real things—they not only lift others up or knock them down, but

they lift *you* up or knock *you* down too! So stop knocking yourself, and pray desperately to be delivered from this habit.

Ask your friends to safeguard you when you use muddy words. Ask Me for specific words you can say when you're tempted to go back to your old habit. Sound surprising? I have alternatives!—Things that you can utter when things go wrong, to show others that you're still trusting Me. Why not start with "shondo" when you're tempted to say that other four-letter word beginning with "sh"?

Perfectly Balanced

"I don't do anything that's unjust or unkind. Everybody's life is balanced—the happy and the sad, the good and the bad."

It's easy to compare with other people who seem to be living on a constant high, people for whom it seems like everything goes right. Of course, you're thankful for the good things I've done for you, for the blessings I've given you, but you can't help but notice that other people seem to have it so much easier.

Shall I let you in on a little secret? The key word there is *seem*. Things are nearly *always* different than they seem, and some people who seem to be living a perfect life have been through some pretty low times too, or maybe they're even going through a low time right then. Maybe for them it's not the circumstances around them that are so tough, but it's deep in their heart and they're fighting personal battles. Maybe they're even looking at you and thinking, *She has it so good*, but they don't know that you're weeping on your pillow every night.

I don't do anything that's unjust or unkind. Everybody's life is balanced—the happy and the sad, the good and the bad. Having said that, I'm not saying to just accept that you're having a difficult time and that there's nothing you can do but try to survive it. I am offering to give you peace and clarity and happiness.





The House of All Answers

"I set that up so that you'd have to keep coming back, so that your brain doesn't get overloaded with too much understanding in one shot."

There's a place in Heaven called "All Answers." It's a cool place where you can go to get your questions sorted out. This hangout specializes in answering questions of the past, rather than questions you may have about Heaven when you get Here. I call it a hangout because it's always full of young people. They seem to have the lion's share of questions, but I love to answer each and every one of them.

There are angels and very wise men and women on hand, who guide you through your questions and show you the answers. Sometimes I drop in for a special session, just to surprise people.

You can't get all your questions answered in one shot, and that's one of the ground rules of the place. I set that up so that you'd have to keep coming back, so that your brain doesn't get overloaded with too much understanding in one shot, and also so that you can have time to absorb the answers and learn from them.

As people come out from getting their questions answered, they usually hang around and talk with other people milling around. They share what they just learned, or find out about other cool answers that have been going around. Some answers are private, but people talk about other answers, and it generates interesting conversation. There are snacks and drinks on the outside veranda where a lot of people gather.

There's a feeling of awesome wisdom that permeates the whole building, because

new truths are being told and shown to people all the time, and it sort of gets in the air.

Kind of cool, huh? I bet each one of you are going to be looking for "All Answers" as soon as you get up Here. I know that you have a lot of questions about life, and about why things turned out for you the way they have. There're tons of questions racing through that mind of yours. Some questions I'll sit down with you and answer personally, but I've set up this place where you can get many of your answers too. You have to have faith and trust now, because "All Answers" is reserved for Heaven.

If you ask Me, I can give you a lot of answers to your questions now, on Earth, but the full and complete answers—and some very special ones—will have to wait till Heaven. That's one of the special things that I have in store for you.



The Ultimate Thirst-Quencher

To those of you, My children, who are struggling and trying to make progress, My Words are as living waters of life. When you're desperately thirsty, you don't think about how you've drunk water so many times before and are bored of it. You just think about how much you cherish that glass of cool, sweet, refreshing water. That water gives you life. You would die without it, and so you cherish it, drink up every last drop, and yearn for more.

I am a tall, chilled glass of water, sitting on a lone table in the middle of the vast desert. I'm magical.—I don't evaporate, despite the searing heat that feels as though it's going to evaporate your very body. Drink Me in deeply. Let the droplets of life trickle on your tongue and then rush down your throat and soak into your body, filling every dry limb with renewed life.

You empty the glass in a gulp and put it back on the table, but take another look. See the glass? It's already full again. You can never empty Me. No matter how much you drink, I always have more for you. I never deprive you of the life found in My Words. It's always waiting there for you.

Sometimes you might be tempted to wander off, to chase some mirage. But when your lips are dry and chapped, and you've lost every drop of sweat there is to lose, think of Me—the glass of the water of life. I'll always be there, waiting for you.

The water might seem plain after you've put the glass to your lips a hundred times, but the fact is, you would die without it. So drink Me in and don't ever stop! Let Me fill every part of you.



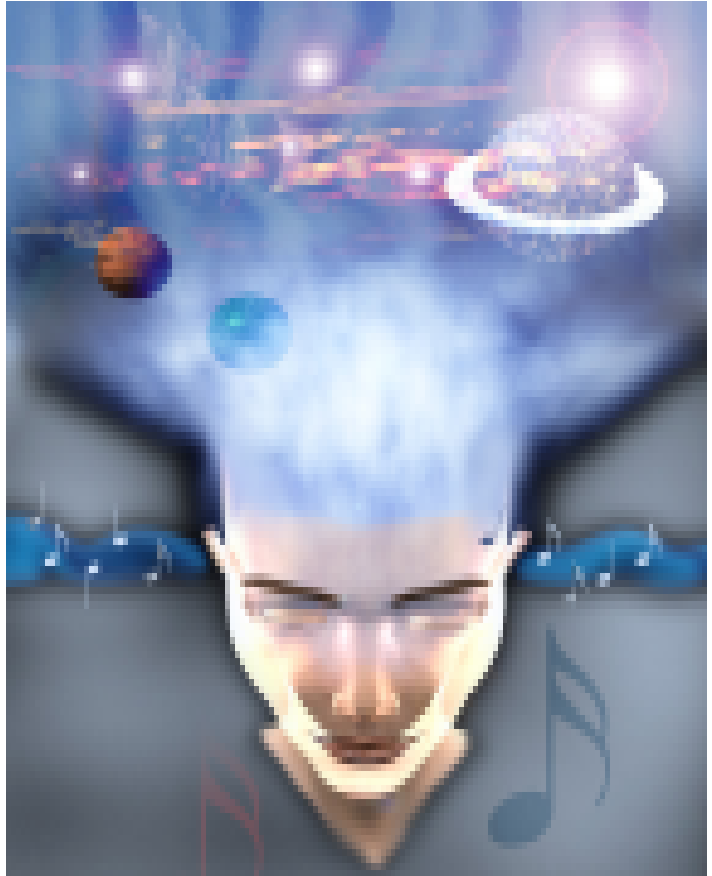
Hold Out for the Real Thing!

"Don't pay his price—
your freedom in spirit
for his sounds."

Pounding, whispering, flowing, or searing into your ears and across the landscape of your mind—there's nothing like music to transport your body to another realm.

There's no greater transporter to surround your spirit and bring you into My realm—the true realm, the realm where the impossible becomes possible, where gravity vanishes, where lights play across the landscape in magical abandon, and where your dreams come true. When you're grooving to music that has been infused with My Spirit, your own spirit is set free to rise above the confines of your flesh and to touch the Holy Spirit, Who is wild and free in every sense.

I am the Lord of the dance, so come and dance with Me. Cut loose from the dark transporter, the one that



takes you into the dank swamp of the Enemy's depression, selfishness, self-centeredness and pride, and come on a ride with Me to a place where you can do anything, be anyone, go anywhere, and enjoy music to the full.

I am the Creator of every great sound that exists.—I've patented them all! So don't fall for the imposter's lie that his pirated, polluted versions are the real thing, or the best thing around. Don't pay his price—your freedom in spirit for his sounds. Hold out for the real thing.—it's only going to get better!