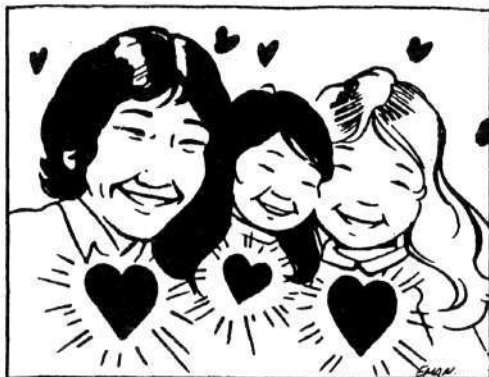


KEEP SMILING!—And Other Helpful Hints for Habits!



KEEP SMILING!—And Other Helps for Habits!

By Sara 7/86

(Excerpts from a talk to a new staff member:)

It's of course a big, wonderful blessing to be here, but you also are sometimes subject to certain lessons, talks & counsel that doubly serve to help the whole Family if you'll just be willing to share them! We've all had to share personal lessons & victories & mistakes with the whole world, & we're real glad we have, as they've been a blessing to so many!

Now we just want to share with you some counsel that Mama has given us on the subject of habits. You say you've had a kind of habit or tendency to stare at people sometimes, & to bite your fingernails, & that's good that you recognise your own little weak areas. Those are two little habits that aren't too difficult to overcome, thank the Lord, & we thought we could share with you the lessons we've learned from our bad habits & how we've tried to attack these annoying little problems. Through Mama's counsel & help we've gotten more of a vision for why we should try to change in those little areas.

We've had all sorts of bad habits on the staff here that we've tried to work on. One was the boys yanking on & scratching their penies & pulling on their trousers, just walking along & suddenly yanking their pants out of their crotch or scratching their behind! They'd just reach their hand down there & rearrange things.—I guess they were all flapsy & flopsy or uncomfy, but when David started doing it too, then we just had to say something about it to everybody, because he started imitating that bad

habit. It looks like you've got cooties or crabs or something in there, it really looks odd!

It was very distracting to say the least, that the boys would almost automatically start handling themselves or go scratching or yanking on it when you'd be having a conversation with them! They didn't even realise they were doing it until we talked about it all together. Mama said, "Well, you'd better tell everybody! You can't just tell David not to do it, you've got to tell everybody!" Even though it was a bit embarrassing for some, we then began to help the boys stop it by patting their hand away or saying, "Oops, there you go again!" What would you think if you were talking to a girl & she unexpectedly started wrestling with her pumpum & panties! Ha! You'd think, "What's wrong? Got ants in your pants?" I'd imagine it'd be mighty bad P.R. in the System too. So that was one bad habit that we had to help each other to overcome.

"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of."

We also had some good talks together & campaigns against body odour, as some people had just really stunk for years & no one ever told them about it until they came to our house. Some people even had stained clothing that would stink even when freshly laundered. When Mama noticed it, she did something about it, & suggested we all eat garlic daily & drink more water & wash more often, & we gave away any old stained, stinky clothing & got some new, clean clothing for a fresh, new start. Dad even talked about B.O. one time at a dinner talk & recommended a certain deodorant that he called "Lacquer"—ha! "It works so good you can't wash it off for two weeks!", he said!

Another unhygienic problem some had was bad breath. We made announcements on it, checked up that people brushed their teeth often enough, reminded everyone to rinse their mouths after meals, & suggested they brush their teeth or use a little mouthwash before dates & dancing.—And it helped!

Mama also gave some real good tips on good posture. Our Queen is a beautiful example of this! One of the first days that a visiting Family member was at our Home, Mama sat down next to him, with her very erect, nice posture, & said, "Now just try doing this for me. Sit up, put your shoulders back,

I want to show you something. Can you sit back any straighter?"—And she placed his shoulders to the back of his chair. "Now look at you!", she said, "Don't you look nice? I think you look so much better that way! Don't you feel better? Now I want to see you walk & sit straight & tall every time I see you! I think you can fight to improve that bad habit. Don't allow yourself to slump over, it makes you look a bit out of sorts—or are you? Is everything okay? Do you have any troubles or complaints?" And he said, "No, no!" "Well, sit up straight! You've got lots to be proud about, you're one of the Lord's children, so be proud of it! Try to sit up straighter! That's right!"

Maria is a real loving mother & she was concerned about it, so she helped him with it, & gave him such sound counsel that it became a real reference point in his life. From then on he knew what Mama expected of him, as she'd given him a positive goal to strive for & several helpful reasons why he should improve in that area without hurting or offending him at all. In a way, hearing the truth of the matter helped set him free of this old habit!

Mama also suggested that if anyone noticed poor posture or bad habits in people, they should help remind them about it in love. "Would you like us to help you with this? Would you like us to remind you when you're slumping?" If you really want the victory, the Lord can do it. Even if you've been doing it all your life & your shoulders have grown a bit slouched due to bad posture, the Lord can still help you gain a better posture & appearance. In our Teen Training Program, we often reminded the teens: "Stand up for Jesus!" or "Walk uprightly!", "Shoulders soldier!", etc. & it helped a lot! We really had to work on that with some of the older or taller ones, & these little slogans were lots more helpful & encouraging than nagging!

THANK YOU FOR REMINDING
ME ABOUT MY POSTURE!



MICHAEL CHRISTIAN

As far as your habits, we don't really mind if you stare at us so much—that's probably because you're new & a little bit nervous or awestruck at times. But there are times when your countenance is quite strained & you look perplexed when people are talking to you. You may not be aware of this at all, but we're going to try to help you see that it's a little habit you seem to have & that we've learned a lot about, for some very important reasons. So the pointers in this little talk are specifically from Mama about our countenance, the expression on our face that manifests our spirit or attitude or feelings, & how important it is!

"The Lord gives us our faces, but we must provide the expression."

We usually assume that when a person's countenance appears a little down or sour or frowning it must mean that something is wrong or they're troubled inside, but that's not always the case, Mama said. Sometimes wearing a sour countenance has become a habit, & the person may not even be aware of how it looks, such as is apparently your case. You don't always look glum, but there have been enough times to make it quite noticeable. It's quite obvious when we talk with you or direct a statement to you that you seriously knit your brow & lose your nice, big smile, as if you're listening very intently. When someone's talking to you, you concentrate so much that you frown or kind of "scowl". Of course, you don't mean to do this, & I believe it's probably because you're really listening, which is good, but it's almost your immediate reaction when someone directs a statement to you. Thank the Lord, it's not all the time. You have, in fact, a beautiful smile! Your whole face just beams when you smile, because you really have an outstanding smile, so this kind of worried countenance is directly opposite from your happy face. So we think it may be just a bit of a habit in your case.

Now, we're not pointing this out to you to make you self-conscious or make you feel like you always look like a big mump-mouth. It's not because we're picking on you, & not because it's a terrible problem whatsoever. Like I say, it doesn't happen constantly, but the reason we're bringing it up is because of the effect an unhappy countenance can have on others!

As Mama said, wearing a smile is a form of Love. You should try to improve your expression & smile for the sake of others. Even if you're not aware of your countenance & it doesn't harm you any, it could make

other people worry or conclude that you're not happy or something's wrong. They could easily misunderstand & even take it personally & think, "Oh, I must have said something to offend him! He obviously screwed up his face when I asked him if he'd mind washing the dishes tonight," for example. No one has said that, of course, but we have noted this down—in-the-mouth countenance in you whenever you are approached or spoken to.

A less-than-happy countenance makes others feel bad because they think that you're feeling bad. They'll think that maybe you're not feeling well or maybe you're worried, or maybe you're murmuring or upset or not receiving things well or something—that's what people naturally conclude when they see a sour face. You've been real sweet & faithful & receptive in every way here, & we don't have reason to believe this is the case for you.

I told you before about "Justus, the Problem", (see ML 954) how he'd look so analytical & critical during Dad's dinner talks. He would cock his head & pull his chin with his hand, & look narrowly at Dad with a wrinkled brow.—His countenance surely bore witness against him! (Isa.3:9) It was very bad! It really bothered poor Dad, & with good reason, because his bad countenance reflected a bad attitude. His spiritual problems were manifested in his facial expression! But we believe in your case it's just a bad habit.

There have been other people here with a grumpy countenance, such as the girl in "You Are Your Own Worst Enemy" (ML 1945). That rebuke did us all a world of good because we all needed it! Lord forgive us, we weren't really sucking & eager & inspired & happy & appreciative of all Dad was doing for us! We weren't supposed to be there for ourselves, but we were supposed to be there to represent the worldwide Family & to be an enthusiastic responsive audience, to show hunger & desire & to suck & inspire Dad through our expressions & our reactions! But look how even one person's countenance in this case affected the whole body & especially bothered Dad in the spirit! How we look to others is often more meaningful or expressive than what we say or do!

There was another person who would also scowl or strain while looking at Dad during class, & we found out it was because she was actually fearful & had a "spiritual pest" which Dad wrote about in "Spiritual Pests & Problems", (ML #1924). We prayed for her & she had a wonderful deliverance from these fears of the past that were plaguing her, TL, when she hadn't fully realised the problem before that time. There have been others

who because of poor eyesight have looked strained when listening in a class—not because they were out of it, but because they needed glasses! Whatever the problem, we need to define it & resolve it!

"Faces are so important. Eyes are the windows of the soul! A happy smile doeth good like a medicine! Wear a happy face! It's your display counter—your show window, your best advertisement!"

We're not saying now that we believe you have to dig up any big deep spiritual problems behind this worried or analytical countenance you sometimes have, I'm just saying that some of us have had some experiences & made some mistakes with our countenance, & it can manifest deeper problem areas of the heart or lead others to believe correctly or incorrectly that something may be wrong inside, see? You said in your reactions, "If there's anything you can help me with or any retraining I need, please tell me as I'd really like to know." So we are!

I'm sorry that this is most likely going to make you feel self-conscious & feel like you may have disturbed other people in the past. It could be a real sensitive area for you, which is understandable. It was a sensitive matter for others of us to hear we had B.O. or bad breath or "jungle feet"—oh, that was another unhygienic habit we had to work on before, dirty, unwashed feet or socks which we didn't allow people to prop up on the furniture.—If they were clean, we'd consider it, ha! We've had campaigns against all sorts of bad habits & the Lord has helped us to change for the better!

So what do we do about it now that we've made you aware of your countenance? Maybe we can pray now that you try to catch yourself & actually see for yourself what you look like when people are talking to you, to help you work on it a little bit, because a pleasant expression is a good way to show love & consideration for others. Making a conscious effort to smile for others will inspire them, so that's a form of love! Especially if someone were to be talking to you or teaching or instructing you, a cheerful, smiling countenance would minister joy & encouragement to them instead of gloom & pessimism.

We are taught in the Family to go out witnessing even when we don't feel like it, or may not be in the victory. We are taught we should praise the Lord when we feel like it & when we don't. In the same way, making an effort to change your countenance & wear a nice smile is just another one of those

little areas to work on, like any other habit, for your own sake, yes, but, mostly for the sake of others! It's love!

"Form good habits; they're as hard to break as bad ones."

If you knew that nail-biting was a major offence to your roommate, that would help give you an incentive to try to not do it any more for their sake. Lots of people have had the nervous habit of nail-biting for years, including me!—I did it till the time I came here! And the Lord is the One Who helps us overcome, especially once we finally become aware of it & get the vision why we shouldn't, which is mostly due to the adverse effect it has on others. That's when you get more incentive to help you to stop a habit. You may think it doesn't do you too much harm, but when you realise it offends or bothers others, you begin to do something about it & try to stop it!

This is what we've worked on with the teens so much, & what is giving them the incentive & vision, & helping them to understand reasons why we should or should not do certain things. There are many reasons why we shouldn't bite our fingernails.—It's very unclean because the dirt & grime you pick up under your nails can give you worms or make you sick, it can do harm to your skin or makes your fingers sore, & it also doesn't look nice, it's unpleasant for others to see. You don't really like it & it's harmful to you, but that's not always a good enough reason to pray you stop doing it! It's not usually until you understand why or how much others don't like it, & how it affects others that you strive to get the victory over it, mostly for their sake more than your own!

Oh, I know another one, those real loud, belching, guttural burps. It used to bring my dinner right to my nose when I was pregnant, & I just had to say something about it, I couldn't bear to hear it. I couldn't eat all day long if I heard one of those big, long, loud burps, & there were a few people in the house that would do it. It sounded just like vomiting to me, & it was the worst thing that could happen to me all day long when I had morning sickness. It was like a fear I feared would come upon me, & even if I'd hear it from down the hall, I'd almost throw up, so I just had to say something about it. Some people may have gassy tumbles, but those long, loud belches really just aren't necessary. It can be controlled or at least stifled a bit. But then, I can't be so self-righteous about

burping because I privately pick my nose by habit, although I've tried to stop for years. I'll bet they wouldn't appreciate watching me pick my nose either, see? But we don't have to just accept bad habits, TTL, He can overcome them! We just have to recognise our weak areas & pray against these bad habits & help each other, & everybody has appreciated the help & prayer! It's all worked together for good! TY!!

The Lord knows we're only human. In fact, we're a mess, aren't we?—But we surely wouldn't want this orchestration going on at the dinner table or when Dad's attempting to teach an Endtime Class! We wouldn't want belches & bad breath & nose-picking & jungle feet & penie-yankers & "tooting" & frowning countenances & worried looks, & slouching & B.O. & nail biting & smacking of food & sloppy table manners all at once!—Although



that's exactly what could happen if we don't go on the attack about it & try to help each other, & learn to improve in our weak areas for the sake of others! We all need to work on reciprocating that real love & consideration for others & cheerful enthusiasm & inspiring loving looks that Dad & Mama have for us!

So do you understand that it's not being hypocritical to look happy & smile for the sake of others, even when you don't feel like it or it's not your natural expression? Maybe your face isn't even built to naturally look pleasant. Just like Mama has said about backsliders in the Family.—She's commended some of them for continuing to witness even though they don't feel like they're such good samples themselves. Many of them have just given up witnessing & don't do anything for the Lord, but others of them, GB'm, go on for the Lord & witness,

even though they're backslidden. Mama said, "Well, good for them! That's not hypocritical! We should witness. Even if you're not happy yourself, at least you can witness the happy Love of Jesus to others. You know He works, even if you are a mess yourself! Even if you're not always the best sample yourself, Jesus never fails, & He'll never let'm down!"

Even if I'm personally out of it & don't have the victory for the day, Jesus has the victory, I still owe it to the children to share His victory with them. I should at least make the effort for their sakes to be cheerful & positive so I don't bring them down! It's to help them & to edify them. What's the other choice?—To cop out & not do it at all, or drag my dumps in there to affect the poor children? But since I'm here for them, for their sakes, I owe it to them to get out of myself & into them with a victorious front & a happy smile, even if I have to just wear Jesus' smile & not my own at first! And it doesn't take long before Jesus blesses you with victory for giving His smile & Love to others!

"It is almost impossible to smile on the outside without feeling better on the inside."

We sometimes manifest how we feel inwardly by our outward expression or outward show, & countenance is an outward sign, & in most cases, your face does manifest the condition of your heart. Even if you don't intend to look worried or sad in your face, that's naturally what other people will see. Your face usually mirrors your feelings.—But that's not always the case. It could just simply be a bad habit & something you may not even be aware of. Whatever the case, we want to help you see the pitfalls & work on it a little bit & pray it will be a victory for you, like the victories the Lord's given us! YJ! In a way it's as if we are asking you, "Are you willing to make this sacrifice to work on this habit for our sake, for the sake of others?"

You did say before you had prayer against self-righteousness & being critical, & we knew that, & that wasn't grounds to reject your coming here by any means, especially since the Lord had obviously delivered you! I've had prayer against self-righteousness & pride a few times myself. We knew that when you came, & it doesn't seem to be a major problem now, because the Lord has helped you with it, & now we can help

you fight against that as well. Sometimes you can look a bit critical, but we know you're making a real effort to fight these attitudes & resulting expressions.

Sometimes you can look dumpty because you're sick or tired or worrying about a problem, but if you don't say with your mouth what you're thinking & meanwhile you're wearing a worried or doubtful face as you listen, it can lead us to think, "Oh, he doesn't like that idea", or "maybe he's doubting if that's a good idea from Dad or not". You see? I'm just illustrating a point here so you can see how other people can misinterpret your expression.

There might be a little bit of fear mixed in, like you said before yourself, like fear of missing instruction, fear of not understanding the instruction or what's being said, & trying so hard to please—I guess all of us here have that point in common, we all really try to please & try to do our best. Or it could be a little bit of fear of leadership, which you've had a battle with before. And of course, coming here & having someone sit down & talk to you, might cause you to worry, "Oh, dear, I've done something wrong", & we can understand that reaction.

But I want to assure you that around here, if you are in trouble we'll say so. Don't worry about it, we all make mistakes, but we use mistakes to teach us good lessons that we can learn together! We'll try to always tell you straight out if you need a little lesson or reminder or if you're not doing so well. There are no two ways about it, you don't have to try to read between the lines, there are no hidden unsaid responses & opinions to cause you to worry or doubt or anything. We'll try to tell you anything you need to know about yourself & how you're doing or areas you need to improve in, just like we are now about your countenance. We'll really be honest with you about things, & we want you to be honest with us too, OK?

One reason why we're so open & honest about our own mistakes & bad habits is because we want to assure you that you're going to make mistakes just like we do & have in the past, & that no one thinks any less of you for it. We don't get screamed at or thrown out because of our mistakes or weaknesses! If anything, although we feel like a mess, we're encouraged to keep going by the Folks' forgiveness & love & mercy for us, & we're encouraged to learn such good lessons from our mistakes by their loving correction. Their love & forgiveness & understanding, like the Lord's, helps to

dispel any kind of fear & worry, fear of failure, or fear of leadership or whatever, although we all did fear failure when we first came here. Many people here have been through some rough times in the past with unloving leadership, but hasn't everybody in the Family had their hard knocks? Thank the Lord we're all still going for Jesus! It did us a lot of good to keep going for God no matter what! But you won't experience that fear of man here & it's certainly not because we're all so wonderful or perfect by any means, as you can see!

Once you've made a mistake, don't worry about it—someone will help you with it & say, "Sorry about that boo-boo that happened today. Let's sit down & talk about it." And the reason we're talking with you now is because it's something that we thought would help you & help us, & would be a blessing to you in case there is any problem inside, any critical thought or doubt or trouble. You can think & pray about it & let us know, OK?

Even if there is some spiritual problem behind it, you can be encouraged that it couldn't be any worse than anything we've already been through here already! Let's look at the "worst" thing it could be: Let's pretend that you have some real heavy serious doubts & criticisms from the past in your heart. Well, the Lord brought you here this far & the Lord doesn't make mistakes, so in that case there is a big victory in store for you! Whether it's a habit or a spiritual problem, it's the Lord who helps us & overcomes these habits or problems, so you just have to give Him your cooperation, whatever the case may be.

So now we expect you to be honest with your mouth & your heart & continue to tell us how you're doing, & at the same time, put on a happy face, even when you don't feel

like it. Improve that sad countenance & wear a happy smile—when you feel like it & when you don't! Keep your heart open & don't "cover up" anything there—except a little bit of a sour countenance with a big, happy smile! This lesson reminds me of an experience I had when my expression affected others:

When the teens were here for training, they were so very sensitive! I was so shocked at how sensitive teens are, & I was totally unprepared! If I didn't take the time to say & explain exactly how I felt or thought all the time out loud in words, they would judge me & figure out what they thought I was thinking, & talk about me among themselves & have the idea all cooked up that I was mad at 'em! For example, once I woke up just five minutes before devotions with my little newborn baby, & dragged into devotions 10 minutes late & sat down with my plate & didn't greet them with a cheery "good morning", but tried to eat & nurse the baby, while just waking up, & I noticed that the teens were all worried & stone-faced. I couldn't figure out why they were so standoffish & nervous until they told me on their reaction tape later, "I've been scared for three days because I thought you were mad at me, ever since the morning you walked into devotions & didn't smile at me." Oh, I felt so bad, because they'd harboured this misunderstanding inside for days, & it happened to two different ones a few different times!

They'd even get together sometimes & say, "Oh, did you see that look on Auntie Sara's face? She's really mad!" I was never really mad at them anyway, but that's what the Enemy would tell them from my countenance. Obviously I wasn't totally mindful of them every minute of the day, I was mindful of me & my old flesh sometimes too, & I had to explain that to them. I said, "Sorry, but I'm not perfect! I'm tired & groggy & I'm not awake yet sometimes when I come to the breakfast table, but please don't take it personally if I don't smile at you or if I don't get to greet you personally first thing in the morning! And when I do, believe me that I'm greeting you because I love you, but when I don't, it's not because I don't love you or am mad at you! You've got to understand that I have trials too. You girls are always having trials—why do you judge me so seriously if I should have a trial?" This type of thing happened often with the teens, so I vowed to myself I'd try from then on to put my feelings into words.

Sometimes I'd sit down to teach Word



class & say, "I'm so disappointed! I just told you all on room clean-up day yesterday to straighten your clothes cupboard & fold your clothes nicely, & I come in today & the room & closet look like a cyclone hit! It's a wreck! You didn't do a thing I said about it! So now what are we going to do? Are we going to have to take our Word time to go clean up your clothes cupboard, or are you going to do it the way it should be done when this Letter is over?" And they'd say, "Oh, we'll do it right after the Letter!" I said, "Good, no Get-Out till the clothes cupboard is nice & straight, is that agreed?" (Agreed.) "Okay, good, I believe you. Now I feel happy. I trust you're going to do it, so let's get on with it. Is everything all clear? Am I mad at you?" (No.) "That's right, I'm not mad at you! Let's just keep going for the Lord!"

It cleared the air & any misunderstandings to just put my feelings into words, otherwise they'd judge me mostly by my countenance all the time, & read into it something that wasn't even there. I felt I was on stage all the time & I failed the test over & over again until I learned to put my feelings into words. I'd still have to apologise, "I'm sorry, girls, I'm not on top of it today because I didn't get much sleep last night", or "I need prayer for more victory today", or "Oh, I'm so hungry I can hardly keep my mind on this study." This nursing mommy really has food trials, see, & they'd say, "I'll go get you a snack!" GBT! And then I'd be all better. I'd say, "I'm not mad at you, don't worry, I'm just hungry!"—or whatever. And they'd all laugh, because it got to be a standing joke after awhile!

See, they interpreted some real bad news through my countenance, & sometimes they too had bad countenances that we really had to work on. I guess that once I told them that their faces show a lot about their inner self, they naturally began to judge me by my countenances!

Did you know you have a gorgeous smile? You really shouldn't let it go to waste, because it makes a marked difference in your whole appearance! It's amazing what a smile can do not only for others, but even for you! When you smile, you begin to feel happy inside, too. It's a sign of faith really, that you can smile & trust the Lord even though things may not be hunky-dory. So keep smiling!—for Jesus & others!

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BIBLE VERSES ON COUNTENANCE:



"The Lord had respect unto Abel & to his offering: But unto Cain & to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, & his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?" (Gen.4:4-6)

"The Lord bless thee & keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, & be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, & give thee peace." (Num.6:24-26)

(When the prophet Samuel was to choose & anoint the next king of Israel from the sons of Jesse:) "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

"Now (David) was ruddy, & w/thal of a beautiful countenance, & goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he." (1Sam.16:7,12)

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." (Psa.10:4)

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted w/thin me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, & my God." (Psa.42:11)

"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance." (Pro.15:13)

"Iron sharpeneth Iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Pro.27:17)

"...Thou shalt make me full of joy w/th Thy countenance." (Acts 2:28b)

"...The children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." (2Cor.3:7b)
(See also Daniel 1:11-15)