

Graduation of A Thankful Parent!

She received the Lord by receiving the Family!

From Marianne at MWM: Dearest Dearest Dad & Maria, ILY BOTH SO VERY MUCH! THESE DAYS SEEM TO BE VERY SPECIAL ONES full of the heaviest moments & greatest blessings with the Spirit really moving! After the most beautiful Sunday Fellowship we ever had—by the best teacher!—this Monday was a very very special day for me—and all here. I feel I have to tell you about it because you were so very present & close & comforting in every way.

FIRST, WE HAD PASSED THE WORD AROUND ABOUT THE "SIMON PETER DAY", suggesting that everyone may want to express their love & appreciation for Simon in various ways, that they may want to prepare something. Then after those two beautiful Letters about Simon—"Prayer for Simon Peter" & "The Simon Peter Day", which really touched us & showed us that we had not given enough credit where credit is due, LHU, —we then received "Appreciation" just a few hours before the party, such a beautiful message & very very needed lesson which you so well put into practice, & we all need to apply better!! You so well know how to encourage us & underline the good, showing appreciation & gratitude! It is so true that it inspires one to work harder, be more loyal, giving, loving, sharing, as you are!

JUST BEFORE WE LEFT FOR THE CAMP MY BROTHER CALLED to announce my mother's departure from this world. She had been quite frail & sickly in the past few years, after being very strong & healthy all her life —& no doubt the Lord was trying to break thru to her.

SHE WAS QUITE A STUB-

BORN JEW, but I know in her heart she was thrilled at the life I live, knew we were different, happy, radical, that we are living a life of freedom & travel & adventure she always longed for (even sexual freedom!), a life of giving & loving others which she admired tho' she would never admit that it was the Lord doing it thru us! She was supposed to visit us here but got sick with ulcers & her already weakened body soon could not resist any more.

IT BROKE MY HEART BECAUSE I KNOW SHE ALWAYS LONGED FOR LOVE, real love. But I don't think she knew the real Lover who could make her happy when she died—maybe she did accept Him at the end, I don't know. However, when I first joined I claimed Acts 16:31 about believing in the name of the Lord & "thou shalt be saved & thy house", particularly for her, & I always had the faith that the Lord loved her in spite of her stubbornness! (Amen! GBN!) WELL, THE PARTY FOR SIMON WAS JUST BEAUTIFUL! The Letters spoke loud & clear,



Marianne & her mother, Holland, 1980. Photo by Paul.

the "share the know" was a needed & sobering eye-opener, & Simon's testimony was really really beautiful, humble & moving too! He indeed is a "very fine son" & an "outstanding man of God", so sweet & precious! We all cried —it was really moving! And every one could hardly believe it when we passed one envelope with a gift for everyone! GBY for your wonderful sample of love & generosity! We all needed this evening! (TTL & the Family!-D.)

WELL, IT TOUCHED ME EVEN MORE WHEN WE GOT HOME TO HEAR YOUR PHONE MESSAGE, that you were so thoughtful & concerned to call & pass me this beautiful comforting Scripture about my mother.

I loved her a lot, as indeed she has always been good to me, forgave me a lot, helped us, protected us even, & loved us in spite of all! I could not believe she could be damned. But there could not have been a greater comfort to me than to hear that you believed that the Lord would give her a good place because she was good to us: (S)he "that receiveth you receiveth Me" (Mt. 10:40). PTL! Thank you so very much for all your wonderful warm love which tickles me all inside! You are both so beautiful! I love you & pray for you!—Marianne. (Ptl! GBN! Such love! ILY2!-D.)

From A Prodigal Daughter!

Response to "Prodigal Prodiges"—Lessons learned about roots of bitterness!

From Sunny: Central America: Dearest Dad & Maria, GBY! I LOVE YOU SO VERY MUCH & really don't know what would have happened to me if it hadn't been for your WWWS! I just finished reading "Prodigal Prodiges". Wow! It was such a blessing to get that Letter! It has changed & is changing my life! I felt so convicted reading it. Word by word, lesson by lesson it almost stereotyped many problems I've had in my 9½ years with the Family.

I'M THE GIRL YOU MENTIONED IN LETTER NO. 155: 59. ("I understand that one of our girls who was recently delivered of diabetes & insulin apparently had a recurrence, probably because of improper diet, returned to the insulin, & nearly died of an overdose.") I always used to justify myself that I was never healed 'cause at the time I was so sick I couldn't eat. But the fact of the matter is I'd always been rebellious (I've been taking insulin now for over 20 years!) about eating the right way.

NOW, SEARCHING MY HEART, I SEE THE REAL PROBLEM. Altho' at times I've had the victory, I never really got the victory over the affliction the Lord had given me. I was bitter towards the Lord about it. How can Jesus heal someone who is bitter against Him? I really did want to serve the Lord, tho', & I know the Family is the best way to do that!

SO I CONTINUED WITH THE FAMILY & LATER MARRIED. However, being rebellious to the Lord in my heart I was openly rebellious to my husband. Can you imagine, all that time I was working with the babies & then the older children & even running & helping to run schools? It makes me sad to think of it, how many little children must

have suffered from my rebellious spiritual condition. TYJ for His mercy!

BY THE RNR I HAD GROWN TO LOVE MY HUSBAND, BUT TOO LATE. When he began sharing with the other sisters, he fell in love with one, & I knew I'd missed the boat. I really was crazy with jealousy & couldn't accept it that we could all three live together, so I left him "to make a new life for myself". Now they have two or three children.

ME?—I'M STILL RUNNING FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER, from one family to another, never finding the right hole, never fully happy just to serve & be a big zero just doing what needs to be done to reach the world with Jesus' love. SO WHEN I READ ESTHER'S STORY IT HIT HOME in so many ways (I too have been sick a lot over the last 3 years). I really cried—& cried out to the Lord, & He started showing me so many roots of bitterness in my own heart. And one was against you, Dad, for the Letters on taking more wives. I realised I hadn't really believed it or accepted it.—And for the same reasons as Esther.

SO PLEASE, DAD, PLEASE FORGIVE ME. I know we live in a spiritual world, so I hope my resentment towards you didn't cause you to be sick or hindered in any way. I'm praying for a total repentance (no more roots of bitterness). So one day I hope to be able to tell you that the Lord forgave me & healed me, 'cause I have learned the lesson & can be trusted with it (healing).

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALL YOUR WONDERFUL WORDS, & especially for publishing "Prodigal Prodiges". Please know I love you & Maria too,

who now I can love more because I see how I didn't before when I didn't really believe in my heart that it was ok to have two wives. Once the Lord gave me a dream: I was making love to you, Dad, & you were a little weak, so Maria was guiding your penis into me. It's true!—Without her we could never have gotten the words! May God forgive me, & you & Maria too.

MAYBE YOU'LL NEVER SEE THIS LETTER.—It doesn't matter, because the Lord Jesus knows & today something changed in my heart, inside of me, when I wrote this to you. TYJ! Please pray for me, another "prodigal daughter". Love forever, Sunny. (GBY! ILY&PFY!-D.)

Christ's Bond-Servant

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword;
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.
My heart is weak and poor
Until I Master find;
It has no spring of action sure—
It varies with the wind:
It cannot freely move
Till Thou has wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.
My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign:
It only stands unbenighted
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has lent
And found in Thee its life.
—George Matheson.

From A Concerned Father!

A plea for understanding a child's reasons & motives in his behaviour!

A letter from Gene, ML. Photoman, to those in another Home who care for his 6½-yr.-old son: Dear One, GBY! ILY! After my visit there I got this horrible sick feeling about a few things I had done concerning B. Well, a few days before we left, B had given me a little wallet that I suppose was his. You know how he is, always giving me things. I DIDN'T TAKE IT VERY SERIOUSLY AT THE TIME, but that is what I felt so bad about, that these things to him are important, & I just brushed them off.

HE WAS REALLY TRYING TO SHOW HIS LOVE & I really almost treated it as a nuisance, LHM! Anyway, I left the wallet there, as I don't need it & it would be in the way here. But then I worried that he might find it where I left it & then feel bad. The same thing happened with a large mural he painted for me. I just feel terrible about it. I do appreciate his gesture very much & I think the only way he'll believe that is if I keep those items. So please tell him I'm sorry & ask him to keep them for me if he wants.

WELL, THIS BRINGS ME TO ANOTHER THING that has been a real burden to my heart. From my being there & seeing how things are & how they go each day, it makes me feel a bit worried for B & how he is doing. Mostly in how he is being misunderstood & treated by the adults there. Overall, I have little or no complaints & feel that B is an extremely fortunate boy, especially for you to care for him as a real mother.

BUT ONE THING BROKE MY HEART & made me feel so very sorry for him. That is that he seems so often alone & misunderstood.—Alone in the sense

that he didn't seem to have anyone who would share & talk to him on his level & understand him. The same thing that I confessed to you above that I did, is what I witnessed others of you doing also, not really seeing the motives & reasons for which he does things. Perhaps I don't see the whole story, but only a portion—but then the Lord often uses those little portions that outsiders see to open up things. I NOTICED SEVERAL TIMES B TRIED TO DO SOMETHING NICE for someone but it actually wasn't that much of a help to that person, rather almost a hindrance. But he was almost yelled at & told in rather rough terms to stop bothering them & that it wasn't a help. His good effort wasn't appreciated. He was scolded in very unloving terms & very little thought given to his feelings.

HE IS JUST A LITTLE BOY, & GROWING & LEARNING, & he needs as much or more consideration as each of us, as much understanding, encouragement & love shown as for our mistakes. I know you all are very busy & have many straining moments in the day, but I think the Lord has a greater peace & rest for us that will allow us to have the extra patience needed to take the time to gently lead & train the little ones. That's our job.

IF HE IS TREATED AS A NUISANCE & A PROBLEM, he'll most likely become one. B needs a lot of love & affection shown to him throughout the day (don't we all!), & firm discipline for his errors & waywardness (in private, as much as possible), & lots of explaining & reasoning to help him understand the things he does wrong, with love & concern for him & his feelings.

I NOTICED AT TIMES THAT

B WAS VERY DISRESPECTFUL OF YOU & others there & often very rebellious. I tried to understand why & thought perhaps it was because he wasn't being respected by those of you there as far as his feelings & desires etc. If I were treated like he was at times with harsh words & threats of discipline, I would be most unhappy. I almost cried once when I saw B sitting on his bed one day all alone almost crying after someone had yelled at him & told him off that he never does anything but make the other children cry when he gets around them. Could you stand to be told that?

B IS GROWING OLDER & perhaps he is at the age where it is more difficult for all of you to understand him & his needs. Maybe it's a difficult age for him as well! That night he helped us pack the trunk he just was so lit up & excited. He was so happy just to be able to be a help.

AT FIRST HE WASN'T A HELP AT ALL but made it more difficult. But he so badly needed to feel useful & helpful that I couldn't help but let him continue. He just loved it & he loved me for letting him. And it was worth the extra hassle for me. I know that in the past I haven't been the best example of being the most loving father. I am learning too. I just felt burdened & think that B will only get worse in his attitudes if he is continued to be treated in some of the ways I witnessed.—And that'll only make things harder for you too.

PLEASE DON'T FEEL DISCOURAGED by this one thing. I am not unhappy with how you are doing with B. Please please share with B that I love him & want to hear from him. I love you too & am very thankful for you. Love, Gene.

"Good Sheps" Couple Apology!

"We both still had a lot of old 'Chain-Saul' ways that needed to be purged!"

Dearest Dad & Maria, I HAVE READ OVER "GOOD SHEPHERDS" FOR THE SECOND TIME since receiving it, & altho' it is "grivous" to bear I am very thankful for these "lashes of love". Everything you said in it is true, & I am very sorry for disappointing you so much, as it really was a "golden opportunity" to express to you both how much I love you & appreciate all that your words have done for me these past years.

UNFORTUNATELY IT CAME AT A TIME WHEN I HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A YEAR OF BACKSLIDING & COMPROMISING & as a result I was in a very unstable spiritual state. I see now tho' I should have taken this opportunity as a Prodigal Son returning to his Father to ask for your forgiveness, which I do now. Instead I was just trying to act like everything was ok instead of being honest with you about what I had been thru. I guess it's just the fear of man. Lord help me!

AS YOU SAID, "YOUR KIDS WILL SPEAK FOR YOU", & I know it's one of my biggest failings to have not brought my son up in the way he should go. I know also my wife is a reflection of me & when I am fighting & feeding her faithfully with the Word she is much stronger as a result.

IT IS SO TRUE WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE HOUSE OF SAUL, & the Devil can still use it as a wedge with former chain leaders if they've not been retrained with care & patience. Well, I can honestly say I want to be completely purged from these old ways & set free so I can be a useful vessel to the Family & His Work.

YOUR LETTERS ABOUT JUSTUS A. & HO & ESTHER, & now "Good Shepherds", have

been such a help to me to see the things that have been hindering me, & I want these lessons to go deep into my heart so that by God's grace I will become a new bottle like so many I see around me & not just backslide into oblivion like so many of the rest of the Chain. Thank you so much for your love & patience, Dad & Maria, & I just pray that I am finally beginning to get the point.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST THINGS THE LORD HAS IMPRESSED UPON ME is the need to spend more time in the Word, memorising scriptures & drowning myself in it, because I know it was the neglect of it that caused me to get off the track in the first place. I know as I faithfully put the Word first in my life it will give me all the drive & conviction I need to be a much better sample in all that I do.

I HAVE HEARD THAT HO IS GOING TO BE DOING SOME VIDEOS of the Family here for you, so we are thankful for this second chance to meet you via Video, & I hope that you will see the change in our lives!

THANK YOU AGAIN, DAD, FOR THAT LETTER & for not just leaving us on the scrap heap. You said in "Backsliding" that "he will do his best to prove that he can make it & work harder at it than anyone else," so this is my challenge from the Letters, & by the grace of God I'm going to be that man! Thank you for listening. I love you & need you so much.—A grateful son, yours forever,

Dear Dad & Maria, GBY! "GOOD SHEPHERDS" WAS VERY SOBERING FOR ME, as I never realised before how deeply that Video had upset you both. My first reaction was real sadness that I had allow-

ed my spiritual state to be a drain on you. I realise now, even tho' I was feeling the way I was, I should have gotten desperate with the Lord & reached out to you by faith to try to give you back a minute reflection of the love & inspiration you have constantly been to me throughout the years.

LHM, I WAS SO FULL OF MYSELF & MY PROBLEMS that all I was feeling was shame & as you sensed, fear that no matter what I said or did you would see right thru me anyway. Your Letter really helped me realise that self-consciousness & fear of not being accepted are nothing but tricks of the Devil to make you look inward & thereby cut off the outgoing flow of God's Spirit. I've always had a problem with this. But now that I understand it, I really want to get a victory over it.

I FELT LIKE ONE OF THE FOOLISH VIRGINS arriving at the Lord's house without any oil. Everything you said about me was so true & helped me to see my weaknesses so I can really try to overcome them. SOON AFTER THE VIDEO WE GOT TO SEE QUITE A LOT OF PAUL & MARIANNE. They were to us like a loving caring balm on our scars & the elixir of love worked wonders in our lives. It was like being wooed back into the centre of the Family after a year of straying. Their sample exposed my selfishness & independence that had hardened my heart & we both really broke, & for the first time in years I was able to let go of all my doubts, fears & insecurity & let the life-giving flow of the Spirit take over again. Their encouragement & inspiration challenged our hearts to get back in the fight again, TYLI