

For age 16 and up. Parents and shepherds can share portions of this counsel or information with their JETTs and junior teens as the Lord leads.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

On Angela and Ricky's deaths, persecution, and other issues

By Maria

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Dear Family,

Peter and I love you, and are fighting the battles right beside you in the spirit! It feels good to be on the attack! It's a thrill to fight any battle, because we know that we're going to come out of it the conquerors! It's wonderful to know we have superior spiritual weaponry to the Enemy, which we can use repeatedly to set him back and destroy his plans! It's awesome to see the Lord do miracles and bring victories, and to know that He's going to continue to keep us and bless us! Hallelujah!

2. In this GN I'm going to present a few of the questions I've received from some of you—as well as some of those in WS—since

Ricky's and Angela's deaths, along with our Husband's answers. The questions were good ones, and I think you'll find the answers from the Lord interesting, encouraging, and motivating. There's a lot that we can learn from this situation, and the Lord has given us some interesting answers to help us gain all that we can from it.

3. I won't be commenting on these messages, as I'm trying to get them to you quickly. So I'll just include the questions on their own (in most cases verbatim), followed by the message the Lord gave. And if you have further questions, as always, please take them to our Answer Man Who sees the big picture and knows the answer to everything you may wonder about.

4. Without further introduction, let's move on into the questions and answers. I pray that our Lover's Words will be a strength to you. The truth within these messages will provide you with more ammunition to defeat the Enemy and win!

Much love, Mama

Hidden in the past?

5. (Question:) Regarding what Ricky did: It really leaves me wondering why he embraced the dark side so completely. Was there something dark in his past that made him go that far? I don't believe so, but when someone murders someone else, in these sort of circumstances (Ricky murdering someone who never did him harm in order to hurt his mother and others in the Family), it makes me wonder.

6. (Jesus:) No, there was nothing dark in his past that made him go as far as he did. It was not Ricky's early years or some hidden thing in his past that drove him to do what he did. It was his "present" that drove him. It was his choices to hold on to his pride and rebellion and follow the dark, evil voices.

7. It was a culmination of choices and decisions that led Ricky in the end to do what he did. But there was no outstanding flaw in Ricky's upbringing, nothing dark and hidden in his past that made him go as far as he did. It simply cannot be blamed on his upbringing.

8. This is one of the most outstanding deceits of the Enemy today, not only in his attacks on My children, but in society at large. So much wrongdoing and evil is dismissed or tolerated in the world today under the guise of using one's past as a scapegoat. So much blame is put on parents, or on circumstances and conditions, on many things—anything but the true culprit, which is often the present and the choice one makes to choose evil over good, wrong over right.

9. You can't blame what happens in the present on the past. You can't blame the decisions a person makes today on his or her upbringing, because everyone has the power through the majesty of choice to do good or evil. Nothing and no one can force a person to make good choices. Not even an excellent upbringing can ensure that a child will make good choices in his or her adult life. It will give them a good foundation and a great start on life, but it's no guarantee. There are many in the world who had great opportunities and near ideal upbringings who made the wrong choices in their adult life and willfully chose to do wrong, as Ricky did. But at the same time there are also many in the world who had difficult upbringings, but made good choices in their adult lives and became world changers. The upbringing is not the determining factor. The choices of the individual turn the tide for good or evil.

10. There was nothing hidden in Ricky's past. It was the choices he made on his own, and his willful rebellion against Me and My ways, that drove him to go that far. Nothing "made" Ricky go that far. He chose. His own choices, his own willful rebellion against Me and My ways, led him that far.

11. (Question:) It says in this message: "Not even an excellent upbringing can ensure that a child will make good choices in his or her adult life. It will give them a good foundation and a great start on life, but it's no guarantee." This makes me wonder about the Bible verse that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pro.22:6). How do the two things fit together?

12. (Jesus:) This promise of Mine is true and will be fulfilled. If you train up a child in the way he should go, then that training will not be wasted. They will never be able to depart from that training indefinitely. At some point they will return to the truth of their youth. That is My promise. But when I made this promise, I didn't say that your children wouldn't have some detours along the way, wouldn't make wrong decisions and get themselves into difficult situations, and even reject their training for a time.

13. Good training prepares a child to make good choices, and guarantees that in the end—whether that "end" is on Earth or in Heaven—they will not depart from the truth of their youth. But good training does not guarantee good choices every step of the way, nor does good training protect

your child from making bad decisions. When your child is of age, the responsibility shifts, and he or she becomes solely responsible for the choices that are made. They make their own decisions to do evil or good.

(Note: See also "The Silver Lining," ML #3166:23-52, Lifelines 24, for more of an in-depth answer to this question.)

How do you explain what happened to Ricky and Angela?

14. (Question:) What is the best way to explain all that happened with Ricky and Angela to someone who doesn't understand the spiritual warfare, or who isn't a Christian?

15. (Jesus:) It doesn't matter whether the person you're trying to explain the incident to is a Christian or not. What matters most is whether they believe in the spirit world or not. There are some Christians who reject any notion of the spirit world, and there are some non-Christians who believe a spirit world exists; they believe in ghosts, angels, etc., and they are open and receptive to that idea.

16. It's futile to try to convince someone that the spirit world exists if they're determined to believe otherwise. The best that you can do is to tell them that you believe and give your explanation. It's very simple, really. The spirit world is made up of good and evil forces. Ricky yielded to the dark side and committed a horrible crime. However, dear Angela immediately came to be by My side.

17. Anyone you talk to will have heard of angels and devils and demons, even if they don't believe in them. Most people know what they represent and what they mean in the spirit world: Angels represent the light and everything that is good. Devils represent darkness and everything that is bad.

18. So most people will understand what you mean when you say that you believe that the Devil influenced Ricky to do what he did. He was on the wrong channel and was getting the wrong signals. Because he rejected Me and the light, he had nowhere else to turn but to the darkness. There are no neutrals. You cannot dabble in the dark side and yet still be in the light. And although not everyone will believe this explanation personally, most will not feel your explanation is completely foreign either, because they have at least heard of the Devil, good and evil, and the spirit world.

19. There are events in the past that you can liken this to, such as the story in the Bible of Cain and Abel. Cain was angry that Abel's sacrifice was accepted and his was not. Ricky was like Cain in that he self-righteously felt he was right and had been wronged and Angela was a representative of both the God that had seemingly rejected him and of the Family whose sacrifices were pleasing to Me, and Ricky, filled with anger on both scores, felt that striking at her would prove his righteousness. Darkness cannot exist in the presence of light; it cannot stand the light. In a sense, Angela represented the light, and Ricky felt he had to get rid of the light in her.

20. Pray that those who need to understand will understand. Even if they don't believe, I can help them to at least give some thought to the spirit world and what goes on there, even if they are a bit skeptical. I can even allow things to happen in their own lives that will help them to see that the spiritual forces of good and evil do exist.

21. It is difficult for mankind to grasp these spiritual truths and realities, for they require a sign and something physical that they can see and feel before they will believe. If a person is open and receptive, I can personally show them these things. If they are not, then there is not much you can do to convince them yourself, aside from a miracle of receptivity on their part. It can happen, but only through your

prayers and interceding on their behalf for them to be open to the light of My truth and Word.

Is it better not to know your future?

22. *(Question:)* I have the impression from the pubs that Ricky knew from a young age that he was special and had a high calling. Can knowing that kind of information when you are young affect a child negatively?

23. *(Jesus:)* The core issue is whether Ricky knowing he had a special calling was more than he could bear and "tipped the scales" against him in his life.

24. I never give you anything more than you can bear. Did Ricky get tempted with pride? Yes, and he yielded to it. But I gave him numerous opportunities to escape. Sometimes he took them, sometimes he didn't. It all comes back to choices and decisions. You are accountable. You are the sum total of your decisions.

25. **Is it better not to know your future?** You, My children, also know your future. And I speak to each of you, and can reveal to you, personally, what is ahead for you. But I never give you more information than you are able to bear or that is not beneficial to you. It's your responsibility to keep coming back to Me, to remain desperate and dependent on Me, to humble yourself in My sight.

26. All of My children have a glorious future, each and every one of you. You could be tempted to get proud about it. The task that I have is that of working in your hearts so you will accept the truth about your future, and you will obey and take action on that truth!

27. **Ricky had a great calling.** He struggled with accepting it, not necessarily because he didn't want to accomplish the great things that were awaiting him, but because he didn't want to pay the price that came with the calling. He didn't mind the crown, but he did mind the "cross"—the sacrifice. Surrendering to My will, yielding, humbling yourself, and following My Word is not easy for any of you, but it is possible.

It comes from living in the Spirit and giving up the things of this world and the ways of this world that are in your heart. It comes from partaking of the divine nature.

28. **Ricky had a godly upbringing. There wasn't any hidden darkness, only the darkness that was in his heart that he refused to forsake.** Were those who cared for him perfect and without mistakes? No, they were not. He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone. Did those who cared for him do anything that damaged him emotionally, physically or mentally? No, they did not. Should those who cared for him have done something different that would have kept what happened from taking place? No, My loves. Ricky made the decisions and the choices, just as each of you make your decisions and choices each day, either for Me or against Me. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

In the public eye

29. *(Question:)* We all know that Ricky's life was more publicized than most children in the Family. His childhood was documented, and he was featured in the Letters and other publications. So it makes me wonder: Did this kind of "publicity" or Ricky being in the "public eye," so to speak, affect him and make him turn out the way he did?

30. *(Jesus:)* There are many thousands of people around the world who face being in the public eye. Many are faced with it every day of their lives, their every move, every word, every attempt to relax being judged, twisted, and sensationalized. They often face humiliating distortions of their motives and actions by hordes of journalists bent on turning their private lives into a moneymaking racket, feeding the public's thirst for something new and different.

31. **It's a less than ideal state to be in, for sure.** But it is a situation that the families of most leaders, actors, politicians, diplomats,

the wealthy, sports stars, religious leaders, and virtually anyone who's well known to the public has to face. Many of them don't like it, but they have to learn to cope with it and can't turn to violence and murder to solve their frustrations. By comparison, the publicity that Ricky experienced was very minor. In the Family he lived in an atmosphere of acceptance and was seen as a role model. And in the world at large he was virtually unknown outside of a circle of former members. His former life was not in any way in the public limelight in the media except where he chose to draw attention to himself by posting things on the Internet and until he committed this atrocious crime.

32. To justify murder, torture, and suicide by blaming your childhood, or publicity—or lack of it—is ridiculous. Each person chooses every day whether or not they will, as My Word says, choose the good and reject the evil. All men choose, whether they want to or not, and all become the sum total of those choices.

Mental instability

33. (Question:) Did Ricky's upbringing in the Family cause him to be mentally unstable in his latter years? Although we've had very few dysfunctional people in the Family, what about those few who had mental problems—whether in the Family or after they left the Family? Was it their life in the Family that caused them to be mentally disturbed?

34. (Jesus:) While environment can contribute either positively or negatively to an already existent problem of mental instability, it is not the sole source, nor even a major factor, when there are other conditions present. If this were the case, quite a few of history's great leaders, statesmen, heroes, and people whose lives have made yours richer and fuller in some way would have been failures, mentally unstable individuals, or worse—because many of them grew up in less than ideal environments and had to overcome major obstacles to become the world

changers which they became. The bottom line is that some of the biggest factors in how you use the life given you, either to do good or to destroy it, are your own choices.

35. Some people claim that environment is the only factor to look at. But it's important to consider all the factors, including the person's mental history before their time in the Family, their mental state during their time in the Family, their mental state immediately after leaving the Family, and their mental state after years of other input. If you want to truly see the causes, taking all these factors into consideration is the only way to discover exactly when the change occurred from contented, balanced, normal behavior to erratic, violent, hate-filled insanity. You have to look at all possible conditions—physical, hereditary, environmental, and spiritual—to see the full picture.

36. In most cases, mental problems can be helped and alleviated by helping the person to make the right choices, by placing them in a secure, loving environment where they can grow stronger, by helping them maintain a proper diet, get proper rest, as well as good exercise, and by helping them keep their minds on positive and faith-building things from My Word. Or in some cases it's necessary for certain individuals to spend time in mental institutions, if they can't be helped by being in a loving Family Home environment.

37. The incidence of mental illness within the Family is extremely low compared to society at large. In a few cases, ones who didn't exhibit mental problems while in the environment of the Family due to the secure, loving atmosphere they lived in, when faced with the harsh, often uncaring, dog-eat-dog atmosphere of much of society at large, did become unstable and vulnerable to mental problems. This is no more the fault of the Family than to say that a person raised in a tropical country where little clothing was needed should blame the tropics because they moved to a frigid zone and contracted pneumonia.

Precedents from the Bible

38. (Question:) Are there any precedents in the Bible or history of someone with such a godly upbringing, like Ricky, turning so bad to the point of murdering someone else?

39. (Jesus:) There are many examples in the Bible of those who turned out to be bad apples despite a good upbringing. Adam and Eve, the very first parents of all mankind, lacked in experience. But they looked to Me for help and counsel, and I directed them right in raising their boys, Abel and Cain. Yet Cain chose wrong. He made the wrong decisions and yielded to evil rather than to good, and he turned out to be a rotten apple.

40. There was Solomon, who was raised by a man after My Own heart, King David. Yet Solomon went far astray, as did others of David's sons. Absalom, another of David's sons, killed his brother and later tried to kill his own father and steal the kingdom. Adonijah also tried to usurp the kingdom.

41. Jacob raised his sons to know Me, and he taught them to the best of his ability. But that didn't stop them from them conniving against Joseph out of anger and jealousy. They threatened to kill him, and in the end sold him into slavery. They lied to their father, saying Joseph was killed by an animal, and for years never confessed to their dastardly act, which left their father heartbroken.

42. There are many such cases throughout history, all proof that the way one turns out does not entirely hinge on upbringing, but is a matter of choice, a matter of yielding to good or to evil.

Life with Grandpa and other pubs

43. (Question:) How should we view things like the *Life with Grandpa* now? Should we still read them with our kids? Will some people not want to read these books—and perhaps other Family pubs—with their kids because they don't want them to grow up and find out what really

happened with Davidito and then become disillusioned? What is the Lord's perspective on this? How should we look at things like the *Life with Grandpa*, and even other Letters and GNs that talk about Davidito in his early or latter years?

44. (Jesus:) As concerns the life of Davidito and your children, this I tell you: You must from a young age instill in children the need to look to God and not to man. You must instruct them that everyone has their choices to make, and what type of choices they make will be determined as they grow older and become of age.

45. You don't ever need to explain to your children what happened to Davidito in a negative way. When they're young, they don't need to know all of the details, and when they are old enough to know more, and you have received My confirmation and the specifics of how to do so, you can use it as a springboard for teaching your children many important lessons. You can use the situation as a building block in the training of your children. But in the meantime you can continue to use the *Life with Grandpa* books and other children's Word books, because the samples and stories that have been given are true and good, and provide excellent training.

46. As your children begin to grow older and are able to understand more spiritual principles, you can begin to explain to them that each child born into the Family will, when they are of age, be faced with the choice as to whether they want to continue as a missionary in the Family or choose a secular lifestyle, and the decision they make is up to them.

47. As their parents, you can explain that you are giving them the best upbringing that you can, doing your best to meet their needs, giving them the care, education, discipline, and moral training needed so that no matter what choice they make, they will be able to live a productive, successful life—whether as a member of the Family or as a member of mainstream society.

48. It will be easy to explain that Davidito did not make the choice to remain a member of the Family. That was his decision, and sadly he made some bad decisions that led him down the road of violence and hate. He turned away from what he was taught in his youth, and chose to reject God and all the things he learned that would have helped him to lead a successful life, and because of this he did some terrible things.

49. His training was not at fault. The training was about as good as it gets—full of My love, My care, and the living sample of My Word, as taught by My king and queen. Davidito was a sweet boy during the time that *Life with Grandpa* and other children's pubs were created; it was only in his later years, when he stopped yielding to Me, that things went downhill. He made a lot of right choices for most of his life, and I give him credit for those. He deserves to be mostly remembered for that. So, dear parents, be sure to give your children a balanced perspective on the situation.

50. (Question:) How can we keep our JETTs and teens from talking to the younger children about all the details the Lord leads us to explain to them about Angela and Ricky's deaths?

51. (Jesus:) There's no magic trick to keep the older ones from talking with the younger children about these details. But you can and should stress very clearly and firmly to your JETTs and teens the importance of not talking about the issues with the younger children in the Home, as it's not information for their little ears. There is no reason the younger children need to know the gory details until they are old enough to understand and handle the information. So it's your job as parents

and shepherds to ensure that your older ones understand the importance of keeping the information to themselves, knowing that when the other children get older, you will tell them what they need to know—and that it's not their place to do so.

52. It's vital that everyone who knows the full scoop on Angela and Ricky's deaths—and that includes your JETTs and teens, since they'll be privy to much more information than the young children—exercises extreme wisdom, prayerfulness, and love by not discussing the issue with those who are not yet informed. Then once you've done your part as parents to stress this point with your JETTs and teens, it's up to them to follow through and obey. You can pray for their wisdom and prayerfulness, and against slips. But after you've done these things, you've simply got to trust Me for the rest. (Note: For more details on this, see Peter's MO site notice on the subject: ML #3529:12–18, GN 1119.)

53. You need to teach your children from an early age that everyone has to make their own choices. Even someone like Davidito, who was given a good life with so much Word and so much training, had his own choices to make. He made lots of right ones in his early years, but he made the wrong ones later in life. Lots of people make the right choices. Lots of people who leave the Family make good choices and simply decide that they want to have a different career than that of a missionary disciple.

54. As a parent, you must have the faith and conviction that the lessons and the training that you are giving your child, coupled with their choices as they grow up, will give them the tools needed to be able to lead a successful

life—whether as a Family missionary or in a secular lifestyle. On that foundation you can stand, and not be swayed by the decisions of anyone else. And with that same conviction in your children's hearts, these things will not move them, and they do not need to be disillusioned by the choices of others.

55. Teach your children to look to God and the Word, not to man. Teach them to base their choices on the Word and not on any decision that anyone else makes. So what if Davidito made very bad decisions when he grew up? The foundation of faith that he received as a child was still right. The principles in the *Life with Grandpa* and the other stories and books are still true and will build a foundation of faith in the hearts of your children.

56. The *Life with Grandpa* books—and others—are not just about Davidito. These are stories filled with lots of important lessons, presented in ways that children can understand. They are stories that show Family children today what life with Grandpa was like, and all of the fun and training that came with it. *Life with Grandpa* is packed with good and helpful tips for training your children. They are still just as useful tools for raising and training your children today as they have ever been. The choices that Davidito made in his later life do not negate the good.

57. So much time, effort, and manpower went into the creation of the *Life with Grandpa* books—and others that feature Davidito—so it would be a shame to now let all of that go to waste. The good within them lives on. So use them, and they will continue to be a blessing to you and your children, just as they always have been.

Different times

58. (Question:) What are some of the differences between the climate of today and the climate of the western world in the '60s and '70s? It seems to me that things are very different today than they were in the past—not

just in the Family, but also in the world at large. For example, there was a more liberal attitude toward sexuality in the world in the '60s and '70s. It wasn't just the Family that was more liberal.

59. So how can we keep things in perspective regarding allegations about the Family's past? I'm not talking about issues of sexual improprieties. I know that anything of this nature has been apologized for and strict guidelines have been put in place to ensure the safety of individuals—and especially minors—within the Family. But aside from this issue, I feel that when we are scrutinized and attacked by outsiders for some things in our past that were more liberal or radical, such as F'ing, living the Law of Love, attitudes toward nudity, etc., we should have more conviction.

60. It seems to me that it would help us, as a Family, to remind ourselves that things were more liberal and free in the old days when the Family was born, and it seems unfair that our past is being judged by today's standards.

61. (Jesus:) When you are attacked or criticized about issues from your past, it's wise to put things into perspective. You have to remember that 20 or 30 years ago, things were very different—not just for the Family, but for the entire world. There was a lot of sexual freedom in the '60s and '70s, an attitude of "Make love, not war." Western youth were more innocent in their attitude toward sex and nudity, more opposed to the values of the System and its cruel wars and oppression of the poor, and more free and liberal in many ways. At the same time, attitudes toward child-rearing were more basic and godly, corporal punishment was common in school, and old-fashioned discipline was a mainstay of most children's lives—to name just a few of the differences. So the Family's lifestyle in those days was more normal because lots of people in the world were experimenting with the same—or similar—sorts of things.

62. The reason I led the Family to be liberal and revolutionary in your early years was because that was the kind of heritage I wanted you, as My brides, to have. I wanted your lives for Me and your service to Me to be built on the principle of being called out from the world and being separate. I wanted to make you revolutionaries so that you would continue to carry that spirit with you no matter what era you lived through in history and no matter how things changed in the world around you.

63. Even though the Family was an outgrowth of the hippie culture, born at the peak of its iconoclastic environment, this wasn't the reason I led you to be more liberal than most religious groups. You weren't just liberal and revolutionary because it was more common in the '60s and '70s. It was more than that. It was because of the revolutionary spirit I wished to create within you, through David's guidance, which I knew would remain within your hearts even as mainstream culture changed.

64. Of course, as you now know in hindsight, David should have put more guidelines and boundaries in place sooner, as he himself admitted, especially for the protection of minors. But in 1986, when it became evident that minors in some situations were being exposed to inappropriate behavior, stringent measures were taken to ensure their protection from any abusive behavior.

65. But you have to remember that there's a big difference between something bad that happened in the past and certain things that were just par for the course of a more liberal environment. In the '60s and '70s, all kinds of things happened in the world that were different and that would never be accepted today by the present world's standards. Once upon a time, spankings were a part of nearly every child's upbringing, and this was not considered wrong by society. Now it's considered wrong in some parts of the world. Why? Because things have changed. The world has changed. People's per-

ceptions and expectations have changed. What was once right is now wrong.

66. So don't ever let yourself be put on the defensive for your past. Yes, you lived in a sexually liberal environment from the '70s to the mid-'80s, but it's not wrong to have lived in such an environment. There's a lot in your life that you've done that the world hasn't agreed with, and never will. They don't agree with living communally, but you live this every day. They don't believe in living by faith, but many of you have done this for years. They don't believe in the spirit world, for the most part, but you do. As I told you in the Bible, the world is at enmity with Me.

67. It's also good to keep in mind that even today, in many countries of the world, lifestyles and attitudes are more free and liberal than they are in others. In some countries and tribes, girls and boys still marry young. In many parts of the world, nudity is not considered evil and bad and wrong, as it is in the U.S. and other conservative nations. So keep the big picture in mind. Remember that things are not always as they seem, and there's no reason that you have to try and excuse yourself or anyone else for the way that you lived 20 or more years ago. Everything and everyone was different in those days.

68. So don't let anyone intimidate you regarding your past. You were different, yes. You lived a different life than what was considered mainstream, yes. But so did many other people. Remember that these were the days of hippies, of drop-outs, of free love. What about all of the hippies—many of whom never even met the Family—and all their "free love"? What about all of the families around the world who didn't consider nudity and sex to be so horrible and bad and evil in those days?

69. Those who are self-righteous like to point their fingers at you in the Family and paint a picture of you being so bad and evil because of liberties or freedoms in the past, while forgetting how different even they were in

those days. Of course, not everyone in the world participated in these liberties, but many did, and have chosen to forget. There was so much that was different 20 to 30 years ago that you cannot judge the world of yesterday by the standards of today. It's unfair and it's not right. So have conviction about that. You can be proud of your upbringing and the differences that make you unique.

70. The Enemy's goal is to make you want to be like the world, to be like everyone else. He wants to turn you from an on-fire, revolutionary disciple, to a Joe Blow mainstream personality. He doesn't want you to buck the tide or like being different. He wants you to be ashamed of being different, of standing out from the crowd. But don't allow him to intimidate you. Bounce back with confidence, and show him—and the world—through your words and deeds, that you are privileged to be counted as one of My disciples. You may not be “normal” in the mainstream sense of the word, but you love it, and you're proud of it!

Preparing children for “life”

71. (Question:) Someone in the Home made a casual comment the other day. We were talking about minimizing System videos in our children's lives, and this person made a comment about not having to be too overly concerned about things like that because, “Look at Davidito and the great upbringing he had, and how he turned out.”

72. I don't agree with the insinuations that come with this comment (that it's not necessary to give my kid the absolute best I can in a godly, Word-based upbringing). Nevertheless, I thought it was an interesting comment, and I wonder if other people are going to start thinking or saying things like that.

73. Yes, we don't want to be so freaked out about our children never seeing a System video or book (the Word doesn't even have that standard, for kids or adults). But if we're overly strict, could we have a major backlash from our

kids when they get older, when they may choose another profession or path in life? I personally want my kid to be prepared to face anything, and I'll do everything in my power to make sure he's prepared for whatever course in life he might choose.

74. (Jesus:) Allowing the children exposure to excessive System input, “because after all, look how Davidito turned out despite a great upbringing,” is exactly how Satan wants parents and caregivers to react. This is a very wrong conclusion, one that the Enemy wants to use to cause people to be lax and to perpetuate a “what's the use?” attitude.

75. The Enemy would like nothing more than for parents and shepherds to throw all caution to the wind and let loose with the System input. This is just as crazy as allowing your children to eat a lot of sweets, “because, after all, they have to experience everything in life,” but all the while their health is being compromised. The Enemy loves this “what's the point?” mindset, for he knows that in the meantime he can get his foot in the door, and a good head start in corrupting their minds.

76. Regarding wanting to do whatever is in your power as a parent to make sure your child is prepared for whatever they may choose in life: First of all, it is important to note that it is humanly impossible to fully prepare your child ahead of time for “whatever course in life he might choose.” Life itself is school, and lessons must be learned all along the way. All of life's experiences are designed to teach you invaluable lessons that will carry over into the next life. The learning doesn't stop when you reach 18 or 21, or 30, 40, 50, or even 80!

77. In reality, one will never be fully prepared for everything in life, because I did not design life that way. Some things you have to learn as you go, and at times your very lack of preparedness is your teacher. That's just the way it is. I'm not advocating being unprepared for things, but what I am saying is that life is full of

surprises, and you will never be as fully prepared as you think you should be for every turn that life will take. But I use these circumstances to teach you and to groom you into the person I want you to be.

78. Some people resign themselves to stop learning. They refuse to learn the lessons that life wants to teach them, and when this happens they become stagnant. It's like they put themselves on ice. Or it's as if they become suspended in a type of time warp. But I guarantee you that at some stage—if not in this world, then in the next—they will have to resume the learning process. What you don't learn on Earth you will have to learn here.

79. Back to the "being prepared for anything" topic: When I say you cannot fully prepare a child for life, I'm referring to preparing them for whatever type of career they may decide to choose when they are of age. There is no way to know what turn of events may happen in an individual life that will lead them to one career or another. This is fluid; it hinges on the majesty of choice.

80. You can, however, prepare your children by teaching them basic principles and solid precepts that will help steer them through whatever they face in life. In this way, yes, you can prepare them. And this is the crux of the matter, because to prepare children for whatever they will face in life has nothing to do with exposure to the world, but it has everything to do with teaching them My laws, godly principles, and solid truth that is steadfast. These are the things they can always refer to and fall back on no matter what they choose to do in life. Preparing a child for life is not synonymous with teaching him or her the ways of the world.

81. Even if you're thinking in terms of preparing your child for a possible eventual worldly career, you can't prepare your child for everything, because you have no idea what type of career that child may choose—be it law, or medicine, or a career in technology, in science, or the arts, or show business, or something else.

In this sense, you cannot directly prepare your child for "whatever he may face." It's natural for a parent to want to prepare their child "for life," and I know this statement is well intended. But the point I'm bringing out here is that there are many things you can't fully prepare for too far in advance.

82. What you can and should do, however, is prepare your child by laying a good foundation in the precepts that are solid and true and which will never change, and those things which will help him or her to be able to problem-solve. It's not that your children will be prepared, as such, for whatever scenario comes their way. But they can be prepared in that they will know who to turn to and how to find the answers they need.

83. Preparedness for whatever one faces in life does not come from exposure to the world. Exposure to the world will always be available, and children will get that soon enough, and as it comes. But a firm foundation in My Word and in My precepts, My truths and My law, is what will prepare your child to find every answer he will ever need in life.

84. It has nothing to do with giving your child exposure to worldly input that you believe will help him through life. It has everything to do with laying a good, rock-solid foundation in My Word, in My precepts, in the things that are true and forever. If you have this right, if you prepare your child in these, he will be prepared for whatever he meets in life, because My Word will never fail to guide him and steer him right.

85. It's a gross misconception to think that an upbringing in My Word and the spiritual principles one raised in the Family has, does not prepare one for life. There couldn't be anything further from the truth! Those who are truly successful in the world have had to learn these same basic principles, which are really My way. Look at the qualities in the world that make a good leader or a good follower: Honesty, integrity, faithfulness, and strong moral fiber, to name a few. There is no better place to learn all

of this than through the godly upbringing that one receives in the Family.

86. The problem with those who have left the Family who end up in a fix and full of problems is that they choose to abandon the solid principles of a godly life and thus start making bad choices. Those who don't abandon their principles and who make good choices once they leave the Family are faring okay. They then easily learn what they need to know once they decide to live a secular life rather than the lifestyle of a missionary.

87. In the world, and amongst your former members, you have winners and losers. And it all has to do with choices. Those who hold on to godly principles—whether they learn them in their childhood, or later on in their lives—and let such principles of love, honesty, and integrity motivate them to make good choices usually thrive. But those who abandon the building blocks of a good and happy life and sink down to the depths of making bad choices end up as losers.

88. Perhaps many former members haven't really hit the jackpot of skyrocket success in worldly terms, but many are doing okay, because they've made the right choices and have held to godly principles. And if you were to compare statistics to, say, the success rate of a high school graduating class and where those students are at 5 to 10 years after high school, you'd find that former Family members fare well by comparison.

89. If you did a study of former members raised in the Family and how many are doing okay, you'd be surprised. They may not be millionaires, something highly valued in the world, but if you were to study their ages and what they're doing, and you compared them to their worldly counterparts, you would find it is comparable, and your former members are often even ahead of what a group of worldly folks their same ages are doing.

90. Not everyone graduates from high school, or even college, and makes it big

in the world right off the bat. Or even in 5, 10, or 15 years they haven't necessarily hit it big. Most go through their years of trial and error and struggle before making it big, and the vast majority never do make it big. Many go through years of trauma; some are lost to suicide or other traumatic circumstances, as statistics show. Many college graduates with prestigious degrees struggle to get the type of job they would like to have. Some eventually do, and some never do.

91. If you did a study on how many people from a cross-section of varied upbringings are fully prepared for life, or even partially prepared for life, the results would be surprising. There is no dress rehearsal for life, My loves. Life is a school, and some things in life cannot be predetermined in advance because of the free will and choice that I have given to man. Some things cannot be established ahead of time, but will be established as you arrive in each grade that life takes you through.

92. The best preparation for whatever one may face in life is a foundation in My Word and My precepts. You'll never know all the answers in life in advance, but you can know the Answer Man and where to turn when life hands you a surprise. This is being prepared to face anything in life. Anyone can learn the ways of the world, almost at the drop of a hat. But it's the rock-solid foundation and principles of My truth that you must get down pat, and help your children to get down pat, if you want to truly prepare them for whatever life may bring.

Ricky's transition

93. (Question:) When considering Ricky's transition to his life outside of the Family, I imagined how hard it might have been for him to fit in, for various reasons. So I wondered about this. What happens to a person who changes professions from being a Family disciple to something else? Why do some former members—most, in fact—do well, while others don't? What makes the difference?

94. (Jesus:) Ricky's transition to life in the world is what he made of it. He could have made it in the world, but in reality, he himself chose not to through a series of choices which he made.

95. His first wrong choice on the downward spiral was to choose to blame his problems on anyone or anything other than himself and the choices he was making. You can't blame Ricky's fate on one thing. It was a culmination of many choices—from choices to blame his difficulties on others, to what kind of work he chose to pursue, to what kind of friends he kept, to what kind of pastimes he chose, to what he chose to fill his head with, to the music he chose to listen to, to the books he chose to read, to the movies he chose to watch. All of these were decisions he had to make, along with many other decisions every single human being on the planet has to make, and Ricky chose wrong.

96. Ricky was not made into a misfit by others; he chose to be a misfit by his own decisions, by alienating himself from those who loved and cared for him, by cutting off his own lifeline to Me, whereby he could have gotten the answers and guidance he needed to make it through life, even life in the world.

97. Ricky was intelligent, well-mannered, poised, congenial, caring, and sharp. He traveled the world. He had many things going for him that could have contributed to him really making it in the world, but he chose to throw it all away. He chose to sit in a pool of bitterness and point the finger and place the blame on others.

98. Why do some former Family members do well and others don't? The answer is all of the above. Again, Family upbringing does not create misfits. People's choices do. And you'll find the proof if you look at the world around you.

99. Ricky's own experiences in life, his travels and upbringing, his forthrightness and cordial ways, suited him well for any number of careers in the world. But he didn't try all that hard to make it in the world. The bottom

line is that he didn't want to work hard for it. The world is a tough schoolmaster. It's a school of hard knocks. It takes fight and stamina and sticking to it to make it in the world, and Ricky wasn't willing to fight that hard for something that in his heart of hearts he knew wasn't worth fighting for. His heart wasn't really in the world. His heart belonged to Me. Although he tried to tell himself that was not so, it was.

100. I would have helped him make it in a career, just as I will help any of My children. Even when they choose a path in life that is perhaps not My first choice, I never abandon My Own. But Ricky turned from Me. He refused Me time and time again. He refused My help, and these choices led him to be a misfit in society at large.

What about future transitions?

101. (Question:) Could anything have been done differently in Ricky's upbringing to make (at the time) a hypothetical future transition to another lifestyle easier? Obviously, Ricky made choices, and those choices were his responsibility, and some of those choices were in diametric opposition to the godly morals he was raised with. Nobody can be the perfect parent, but can we—should we—SGAs find a different balance, giving our children the godly Word-based upbringing they need and deserve, while ensuring that they would be able to fit in if they felt their destiny calling them elsewhere?

102. (Jesus:) It was not Ricky's upbringing that made it so difficult for him to make the change to a secular lifestyle. It is important to note that establishing a career in the world is difficult, period. This is not something that is only true of your former members. High school and college graduates from all walks of society find the same. Some fare well; others struggle. The world does not hand you success on a silver platter, My loves.

103. You must remember that the System itself puts you in a tight corner. What if the

tables were turned? The System doesn't prepare people to be missionaries. Look at the hard time people sometimes have in making the break with the world and serving Me, when they've been raised in secular society their entire lives. Anytime someone significantly breaks out of their norm in relation to the way they were raised, there is an adjustment period, which often is very difficult for people—and some never adjust.

104. For example, there have been those who were country girls and boys who at some point decided to move to the big city, and found it a terrible struggle. Or vice versa with an adjustment from big city life to country life. Sometimes you have corporate executives who are asked to serve in a foreign field, so they move their entire family to that country. Sometimes husband, wife and kids all adapt just fine. Sometimes not. Sometimes some do and others don't—either the wife never adjusts, or both husband and wife don't fare well, or the children don't, and so on.

105. Everyday life brings with it many changes and frequent needs for adjustment—moving from house to house, city to city, or job to job; getting married, having children, getting divorced; coping with the loss of friends, loved ones, or parents. These changes are difficult for many people.

106. When two people from different countries, races, cultures, or backgrounds fall in love and marry, in some cases they later find it difficult to make the change to truly accept the culture of the other. Some make these types of transitions well, and others do not. Again, much depends on choices, on attitude, and on the level of faith and fight and determination each one has in order to make things work.

107. Once again, it was not Ricky's upbringing which caused him to be a misfit; it was his choices. It was rebellion and rejection of Me and My ways. If he hadn't rejected Me, if he had looked to Me, I would have helped him to make a wonderful transition to his new life.

108. Watch out about trying to dig so deep in analyzing and figuring it all out. This can be dangerous, and under the guise of trying to "understand" and seek a "better way," there is a risk of losing faith and trust in Me.

109. Beware also of being unrealistic and setting your sights and standards impossibly high for yourself, for your children, or for the Family in general. You're not perfect, your children aren't perfect, and the Family isn't perfect. You can't prepare yourself or your children for any possible future mistakes or bad decisions you might make. But you can trust in Me and put your life—and the lives of your children—into My hands, knowing that I will care for My Own.

110. As far as preparing children for a possible transition to some other lifestyle in the future, this question is well intended. Yet I have given you so many truths and facts about the future, My dear ones, and it is not the best use of your time to create hypothetical scenarios or to theorize. You're better off sticking to the facts that you do know, the prime one being that you are living in the Time of the End, and I call you to live like it. This includes giving your children the best foundation you can in My Word, and teaching them My ways. Give them the best godly education you possibly can, for this is the best preparation for their future, whatever their personal future may be, whether as a missionary or not.

111. My message is still the same: I have called you, the children of David, out of this world's System. You are in the world, but not of the world. Yes, it is a staunch stand; nevertheless, this is what I expect from full-time disciples. Yes, it is uncompromising. Yes, I want you to be sold out to Me, and to teach your children likewise. When they are of age, should they choose otherwise, that is their choice—and you should then help them in whatever ways you can to ensure that their transition to a different life is as smooth and easy as possible. But before your children are old enough to make the choices of

what road their lives may take, I want you to give them every opportunity to serve Me fully. This is your God-given responsibility as disciples and parents.

112. Be careful about putting the cart before the horse, about hypothesizing and thinking, "What if my child decides to choose a secular life when he is of age?" to the point that this mindset hinders you from doing the best job you possibly can to give your child a firm foundation in My Word and My ways today. A double-minded man or woman is unstable in all his or her ways, and if you divide your efforts too much, you will find that you will not do your best at the most important thing—which is giving your children a firm foundation in My precepts.

113. If you parents preoccupy yourselves too much with theorizing, you won't do as good a job of raising your children, for you will be divided in your efforts, divided between teaching your children godly precepts and teaching them things of the world.

114. Once more, the best education you can give your children is a firm foundation in My Word and ways, and if you do this, should they decide to pursue secular life later on, their foundation and upbringing will not hinder that. Sure, there will be a transition period, but with My help and guidance, and yours as well, we will help them through it.

115. There's nothing odd about a transition period when one decides to change course in life. Just because an adjustment period is needed doesn't mean one's upbringing has been all wrong. Transitional periods are part of life and part of what many people in other walks of life have to go through as well.

116. My mandate to parents is the same today as it's always been: train up your children in My ways. You don't have to worry about trying to prepare them for this or that hypothetical situation. Sufficient unto today is their education in My ways. Do your best in caring for and raising your children today by teaching them My Word,

by living the splendid CP/FED criteria you now have to the best of your ability.

117. Your standard today is already different than in years past. I've already given you a different balance, and it's all outlined in the current CP/FED criteria. This is the standard you should follow today. If you follow this, you'll be giving your children the best upbringing you can. And if down the line your child does decide he or she wants to take up another career, I will help you to help them make the transition when the time comes. But today, focus on what only you can give them.

118. Your children can learn the ways of the world if they so choose later on. But I call you to wholeheartedly train them today in My precepts, the things that will last forever and shape them not only for this fleshly life that is but a vapor, but for all eternity.

It Will Be Worth It!

119. (Jesus:) My Family parents will be thankful that they are bringing up their children in My ways today, for it is these children who will be among those who stand in the gates and proclaim My truth in the Endtime.

Is suicide the Family's fault?

120. (Question:) Some ex-members are saying that if someone leaves the Family and commits suicide years later, it's the Family's fault. So is it the fault of the Family? Or what are the reasons for these suicides, even if there have been far fewer than these people say there are?

121. (Jesus:) As sad and as tragic as suicide is, people end their lives for a variety of reasons. Of course, it seems compounded sometimes among ex-members, because they know each other, or know of each other. The Family is a small community, and even those

who leave the Family remain in touch, and word spreads about things that happen to them. That's why it can seem that there are many ex-members who commit suicide. The reality is that in the world, there are many more who commit suicide, but word of their death is not nearly as widespread because their families are smaller than the Family.

122. It's not the fault of the Family that people end their lives. There are many reasons that people commit suicide, and none of them are the fault of the Family. If you were to thoroughly investigate each instance where there has been a suicide, research the history, the life that person led, and everything that led up to the ending of their lives, it would be clear that it wasn't the fault of the Family.

123. Some people battle depression and hopelessness. There are people who fight these battles in the Family today, but while they're in the Family and surrounded by strong people who can help them through, it's much less likely that they will do harm to themselves. If those same people leave the Family, there may not be anyone who can be on call to pray for them and help pull them through and prevent them from harming themselves when they fall into that pit of depression. That is one example. There are people all over the world (outside the Family) who battle depression and have these tendencies. Some people yield to suicidal temptations, others do not.

124. There are some who were mentally unstable, or who had other problems, which caused them to be suicidal. They felt they couldn't take life anymore. Some people may have been mentally stable, but they lost hope in life, for whatever reasons, and then yielded to the temptation to end it all. Some people led lives that were less than good, and then they felt that others had lost hope in them, so they lost hope in themselves. There are yet other cases that you won't find explanations for. Who knows the depths of a man's heart, what transpires and what brings them to such a point, especially when

they keep it to themselves and don't reach out for help? With some you will never know, until you come here.

125. But each one who ended his own life had very personal reasons for doing so, and it's not something that can be blamed on the Family. Men and women are responsible for their own choices, and I do not allow any of My children to be tempted above that they are able to bear. The reality in many cases is that the Family prevented people from taking their lives, and when some lost the support and the strength of being in the Family, that's when they yielded to those temptations.

126. Those who look at these things logically will see that the blame is not the Family's. In some cases there may have been a history of mental instability, in other cases a history of depression, and those battling chose to give up the fight. In some cases there were no clues that that person was contemplating such a thing, but in a moment of despair they just decided to end their lives.

127. The Devil is the one who brings people to this point; it is he who seeks to snuff out life, for he hates life, so he tempts people with these thoughts, and some people succumb. Those who have never experienced depression do not understand how strong the forces are that would cause someone to end their life. It's a spirit, a very strong spirit, that causes people to go there, and some give up the fight. They cease depending on Me, they cease calling on Me for help to resist the temptation.

128. It's not the Family's fault; it's not My fault. I love life, and I want to see everyone happy in life! But it's the evil works of the dark side that cause people to contemplate, and in some cases much more than contemplate, snuffing out their own lives. They know better now, they see and understand how it came about, and they are sorry and ashamed for the pain and heartache that they caused their friends and loved ones.

129. (Mama:) The problems of life should never make people feel that suicide is inevitable. The Lord can help those who consider themselves the most hopeless of cases if they'll go to Him for His help, as He reminds us in the following message:

(From "When Is It Your Time to Go?")

(Jesus:) Oh, how it breaks My heart when one of My children takes their life! How it grieves Me and causes Me deep sadness, because I know if you would have only turned to Me and come to Me with your problem, no matter how great, I could have helped you. So it breaks My heart that My children don't have the faith to trust in Me and My power and love.

There's no one that is too bad for Me. There's no one that I would not help immediately. If you call to Me, I would never turn you down, but I would be immediately there at your side. I am a very present help in time of trouble and trial. Sometimes I remove the trouble and trial, and other times I give you the grace and strength to bear them, or the peace of mind to trust Me, or the comfort that comes from knowing that I will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.

Don't you think that My power and strength and love are sufficient to help you? There's no problem, no sorrow, nothing that you and I together can't handle and work out. Sometimes My help and support are not visible or apparent to you, but I answer your prayers, even though it is not always in the way you think best. I answer according to My will, I help according

to what I know you need most, and I never fail to care for My children and to help them in the way that I know is best.

Yes, life is a struggle, and not everything goes smoothly and easily. There are many ups and downs, and these ups and downs are My plan for you, to teach you to come to Me, for you belong to Me. So when you, as My loved one, don't come to Me with your deep problems, how that hurts My heart! I would never fail you. I never reject you. I never look down on you. (ML #3228:37-40, GN 830).

Faith over fear

130. (Question:) I don't want to sound like a real doubter, but it's quite disheartening to think that one of us who was actually faced with a life-or-death persecution situation didn't make it through. Angela served the Lord a good majority of her life and was certainly worthy of being "rescued" by the Lord. Obviously, He didn't protect her for one reason or another, and He had a purpose in her death, but it doesn't allay my fear that if I'm ever faced with real-life persecution or a threat to my life as she was, I'm probably just going to "suffer for His name" and wind up dead.

131. The questions arise: Did she rebuke Ricky in the name of Jesus? Did she call on the keys? If I had been in her place, would I have even thought of those things at the time? Or would I have been basically overcome by fear and terror? I mean, if someone is coming at you with a weapon, it's a "scream and run" type situation in my mind. I don't know that I'm going to be thinking of much else. I'm sure the Lord will give dying grace when it's my time, but if it's not my time, it's likely that if I'm ever faced with that type of thing, I'll just poop out and be killed anyway, because of regular old fear.

132. (Jesus:) Faith comes; it grows. It grows through faithful study of My Word. It grows through obedience to My Word and what I tell you to do. You don't have faith for certain things right now because it is not My time for you to experience them—and maybe it never will be My will for you to experience them. If you think of something like that now, you feel fear, and you wonder if you're ever faced with something similar you'll give in to your fears or you'll find My strength and peace through it.

133. First you have to realize that what is important is My will being performed, according to the circumstances of a situation and the choices of the individuals involved. Once the circumstances were in place and the choices had been made, it was at that point My highest will for Angela to come into My arms. That is why I didn't protect her from this evil happening. I did protect her from the pain and horror of it, because that was My will.

134. Angela's death had nothing to do with whether she "deserved" to be rescued or delivered. It was simply My will to bring her Home to Me. Claiming the keys and rebuking the Devil also wouldn't have changed the situation once My will had already begun to be set in motion. Since the keys only perform My will, claiming them would not have reversed the situation, but of course they gave Angela comfort and help and strength when she needed it most.

135. I have many reasons I allowed this to happen at this time and in this way. But you must simply trust that I did not need to deliver her from persecution. I did, however, shield her and protect her spirit and bring her safely Home to Me.

136. I am teaching you as a Family more and more about how to find My will and abide in it and praise Me for it. This is a skill that will be very needed in the days to come, so that you will be able to react in faith, trusting Me, in spite of situations that seem to be very bad.

So focus on the lessons that I am teaching you today, lessons about performing My will and obeying Me and My Word, for this will give you the faith you need. And someday if you find yourself in a situation that you have long feared, if you have the confidence that you are obeying Me and are in My will, then you will have perfect faith and no fear. You will be able to perform My will exactly as I have ordered it. Then because you will be in My will, the keys will be able to perform miracles for you.

137. You will fear no evil, because you fear Me and you obey Me and you trust Me. This is the strong faith that I am talking about that you need to have. The tests and trials that come your way today may seem big and hard to you, but they are preparing you and strengthening your faith for what is to come. That faith will be your salvation in the days to come.

138. So praise Me for each circumstance that I allow to come into your life that stretches you, that is difficult, or that is causing your faith to become stronger, for it is working My purpose in your life and it is removing your fear and giving you strong, unshakable faith. That is the kind of faith that will overcome the world and all the evil in it, and bring you safely into My arms.

Prayers for Ricky

139. (Question:) Mama and Peter have mentioned that they prayed for Ricky every day. Those in the WS units prayed for him for years, as did many others in the Family. I know our prayers are never wasted and that the Lord uses them for good, but I think people would be interested to hear what the Lord has to say about all those prayers prayed for Ricky—especially in light of the sad events that transpired. What happened to them when they were prayed? Where did they go, and what did they do?

140. (Jesus:) This question is a heavy one that burdens many. But in truth, the answer is very simple. I'll give you the short answer first,

why there was a great discrepancy between the prayers that were prayed and the outcome of the situation. The one-word answer is choice.

141. Prayers are powerful. Prayers have an effect. Prayers change things. Yet one of the foundation principles of prayer is that, as David illustrated with the analogy of the billiard balls, things have to be in the right position. The heart of the recipient of prayer has to be in a position of receptivity for certain prayers to take effect.

142. No matter what condition a person is in, I can speak to their heart, as can My angels and ministering spirits. We can seek to influence their thoughts. We can in fact force them to hear us and even see us, even if they are not open and receptive. But what we cannot make them do is believe us, receive us, and obey us. That is the essence of the majesty of choice, which I have given to man, and which I do not override. That is part of My plan for humanity. I gave man free choice, and I must let him choose his path, his destiny, even his end—no matter how bitter.

143. Some do not consciously realize how the choices they make each day are affecting their lives and where their choices are taking them. Others see it very clearly. Yet in every case, the fact is that I can say and do whatever I want, even miracles and wonders—and I do many things in answer to specific prayers—and yet, when a person chooses to reject the voice of My Spirit, even to reject the opportunities and blessings that I place in front of them in answer to your prayers, I cannot force them. I cannot force them to obey, no matter how much it is for their own good and benefit, if they are determined to do otherwise. I cannot force them to receive My blessings, no matter how much I want to bless them.

144. Your prayers for Ricky sent many good and positive things his way—but these were things that he rejected. Your prayers sent him good thoughts and happy memories of his times with you, with Dad, and with his

Family—but in his pride and in his yielding to evil, he rejected them. Your prayers brought to his remembrance the voice of truth, the Words of the Bible, and the Words of David—but in his pride and in his desire to go his own way, he rejected these words and tried to root them out of his soul, although he was not ever able to fully do so.

145. Your prayers sent him opportunities to get on with a normal life, to make something good of his life.—And he did get good jobs, nice places to live, and enough income to have a comfortable, happy and productive life, and yet he chose of his own accord to make his life miserable, and not only unproductive, but hurtful and vengeful. Your prayers sent him visions of things to come, a knowledge and understanding of the afterlife, and of what awaited him in My realm—both what awaited him if he chose My way and what awaited him if he chose Satan's way. However, he did not yield to this knowledge, but rather yielded to the pride of self and the pride of life, and chose to reject this belief and pretend he didn't believe it.

146. He tried so hard not to believe it—but he always believed it. He always knew his judgment was coming. In his arrogance and bitterness, he went as far as to test Me, really, by the final act he committed before he took his life. He was far gone by then—far, far gone, not from the reach of the voices of truth and love and grace, but far gone from receptivity and openness to them.

147. On the positive side, your prayers for him, together with the prayers that the Family faithfully prays for you, My king and queen, were able to stop him from doing worse damage than he did. For in his hatred and in his yielding to the Enemy, if he had had opportunity, he would have sought to bring pain and death to many more than just one. He would have tried to harm My anointed king and queen, and as many others as he could as well. If he had been given the opportunity to do damage to more, he would have taken it. So know that while

prayers do not force someone to conform to My will—for to them is given the majesty of free choice—nevertheless, the effects of prayers can be such that I can physically alter surrounding circumstances, affect others who are receptive to prayer, and thereby create changes in the “pattern” or plan for how things will happen, so as to minimize the damage done by one who is not receptive to the effects of prayer, because he rebels against Me.

148. This is the way prayer works. These are principles that you know and have seen before to some degree. But I know it is somewhat shocking to see how far gone someone can become—so far gone that even the most loving and heartfelt prayers are rejected, and that the very essence of truth is cursed by them, because they come to curse Me and hate Me. This is the sad end which comes to those who choose pride over humility, lies over truth, darkness over light, hatred over love, bitterness over forgiveness. The first steps seem justified, even if only due to strong delusion, but the last steps always lead to a bitter end, and one that even they cannot justify, so they have to pretend to reject.

149. Those who have truly known Me and My love, even though long ago and after many wrong choices, can never totally get over Me or get Me out of their hearts and minds. There is always that helmet of salvation fixed to them—fixed through My Words, which also burn in their hearts and heads. Then the prayers of loved ones who fight for them in spirit make it so that it is as if a set of headphones with constant reminders of truth, light, and love, are playing within that helmet. They speak to them continually, and your prayers give them every chance to receive, to believe, to change, to love—but in the end it is always their choice.

150. Ricky had the opportunity to receive your loving prayers and to turn his heart to Me, to truth, to love, because of them. Your prayers gave him every opportunity in the world, chances over and over and over and yet over again to open his heart to the good that remained there,

because of his godly upbringing and because of the voices of My spirits, and My very own voice. Your prayers did exactly what they were meant to do. You did well, you fought well, and you gave all that you could. Of that you can rest assured and be at peace.

151. My power, which your prayers are part of, is what will win out in the end. In the life to come, all wrongs will be made right; perfect justice will be given to each one, and all will be judged according to their works, whether they be good or evil. Part of your “works” and your service to Me and what earns you reward in the realm beyond is your faithfulness to pray. As for the recipients of your prayers, likewise part of their works and the determination of their reward or judgment is according to how they receive and use what I send them in answer to your prayers. So prayer is a very important part of fulfilling My overall eternal plan for each soul, and determining your destiny, your place, your position, and your reward, in the life to come.

How to pray for our enemies

152. (Question:) Because of the way that some people are fighting the Family, and Family members as individuals, it's natural for some of us to feel angry or upset. But how does the Lord want us to look at them? How can we have the Lord's perspective and attitude toward those who are fighting us? How can we rise above bitterness and love even those who have said they are our enemies and want to destroy the Family, as the Lord has instructed us to do (Mat.5:44)? How can we put on His mind and have His perspective? How can we avoid getting bitter, and love and pray for those who persecute us, which is our responsibility as Christians?

153. Also, the Lord has instructed us to “pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us,” so how can we best pray for them? Obviously we want to pray against the things some apostates are trying to do to hurt and harm the Family, but does the Lord have any more counsel on that?

that I completely turn them from their evil ways, but beware of praying for Me to bless them. To bless them is to weaken your defenses, for they are hell-bent on destroying the Family. Therefore, pray fervently that I will do whatever it takes to stop them from doing harm. Pray that I will turn their curses back on their heads if need be, and do whatever I must to silence the lying lips, stop their attacks on you—both physical and spiritual—and confound and destroy their evil works.

157. You are in a war. It may grieve you to have to launch a spiritual attack through prayer on one who was once your friend, but has now become your avowed enemy, determined to destroy your work for Me. Yet failing to do so will result in great damage.

158. The Enemy will try to lull you, My children, into feeling sorry for these who have chosen the darkness. While you, out of love for them, should pray that I will deliver them from the clutches of the Evil One, you must remain strong in your convictions. Refuse to allow the Enemy to lure you into his trap by using their former relations with you to cause you to feel sorry for them and to get you to let down your guard in prayer.

159. So if you are tempted to “go easy” on those who have chosen to turn to the darkness or to fight the light that you carry in your hearts, remember that the greatest love you can show them is to remain strong in Me. Remain an anchor in the spirit, founded and stayed on Me, a firm mooring that will in the end help them to find their way back to the light—either in this life or the next. It is in love that you pray against the evil they have taken in.

160. And as for how it is possible for you to love your enemies, despite what they're doing and how they're fighting the Family: Stop for a moment now and think about the waterfall of My love. Although it's unfathomable to the human mind, just try to imagine the depth, the breadth, the power, and the speed with which it flows. Take a moment to reflect on My love—how it's

unconditional, larger than you can comprehend, constantly increasing.

161. That is the pure, heavenly love I want to fill you with. I want to fill you with the water of My love until you overflow. I want My love to dwell in you so richly and fully that it washes away any negativity, dislike, anger, resentment, or bad feelings from your heart, and replaces them with forgiveness, acceptance, understanding, and heavenly grace.

162. I have love so overwhelming that I was able to pray, and mean with all My heart, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” in the midst of indescribable pain and torture. Try to picture yourself in that position for a moment, and reflect on the miracle. This is the power of My love.

163. You have heard many times that love is the greatest force in the world, yet it is a deep truth, one that is incomprehensible to the carnal mind. That statement is a truth so deep you will only be able to fully comprehend the depth, meaning, and power of it when you are no longer living in the realm of the flesh.

164. Yet even though you cannot fully understand the full power of love right now, you can have a measure of this love. You can have enough of My love that it will defy all “logic,” surpass all ill will, and lift you far above the bad feelings, negativity, resentment, bitterness, and hatred the Enemy would love to bind you with. This love will overcome all pain, all hurt, and all animosity, no matter how great. It is yours for the asking. You have but to ask and I will give it to you. It's not about feelings or logic; it is simply a spiritual gift that you can receive.

165. Once you ask Me for this gift of love and truly desire it, I will enter your mind, heart, and spirit, and speak to your very heart of hearts. Then you will know and understand and feel the right feelings. I will give you the gift of overcoming. I will give you overwhelming love for those who were once your brothers and sisters, but are now trying to be your enemies.

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166. I will help you to feel the sorrow and pain I feel for them for their wrong choices, and all the hurt, confusion, and pain they have caused and are causing. I will help you to pity them for the emptiness they now feel since forsaking the spiritual riches I gave them. I will help you to love them as if they were your son or daughter, or dearest friend or lover.

167. I will help you to know, understand, and feel these things in the spirit, for it is only in the realm of the spirit that these feelings can be fully understood. I will help you to understand the pain and shame that some will feel when they stand before Me to give account of their life. Then, instead of anger or any other negative feelings, you will feel compassion, sorrow, and a true desire to see them change—not just so they will stop trying to cause you trouble, but so that they will not have to experience the eventual consequences of their wrong choices.

168. Praying against the activities of those who are fighting you, and who have chosen to try to destroy the Family and what it stands for, is love. When you pray, you're showing that you love them enough to care. You love them enough to pray that they will make good choices, because you know that when they make bad choices, it doesn't bring them or anyone else happiness. Praying against your enemies' efforts to hurt the Family is also love for your brethren within the Family, because you are praying for their protection and safekeeping.

169. My love is great enough that it can help you to love and pray for each one as if they were your own son or daughter, lover, or best friend—even those who are doing you wrong. Once you make the choice that you want to see them the way I see them, and reach up in faith, I will pour into you all the love you need, as well as the wisdom and balance you need. I will help you to know how to love them in the spirit and how to pray for them.

170. I will work in your heart, helping you to truly "love the sinner" while at the same time hating the sin and being wise, prayerful,

and on guard. I will give you not only love, but the wisdom and discernment to put that love into action through your prayers and your communications (for those of you who need to communicate with these very antagonistic former members).

171. Through these difficult and dark times I am drawing you closer to My side. I am helping each of you to become more like Me. Although it's difficult to love your enemies, it's a definite quality of Mine, one which I will be more than happy to share with you in great abundance.

172. If you don't feel that you can love or forgive, then you need to strengthen your foundation in My Word. You need to fill your heart to overflowing with My Words on the importance of love. Look up persecution-specific examples, and claim the power of the keys to open your heart to receive My truth, power, and love. All you have to do is desire it, and do your part to strengthen your faith if it is weak in this area. I will do the rest, for it is not a work of the flesh but a work of My Spirit, which I will more than gladly work in your heart if you will open it to Me and ask.

173. (Jesus:) It takes a supernatural miracle, rising above, and putting on My mind to not get angry, upset, bitter, vicious, and vengeful in your thoughts and words toward your enemies. It's natural to get upset when you are being wronged, and even more so when you are being viciously attacked by those you once loved and cared for, whom you, personally, have done absolutely nothing to hurt or upset, and in many cases much to love, care for, and help. It hurts, and when these false accusations are causing your children to potentially be endangered, it's almost more than you can bear.

174. I understand. I too was persecuted, attacked, insulted, lied about, beaten, tortured, mocked, rejected, hated—and more—by My enemies. I experienced extreme injustice, and was tempted to lash out in anger at those who

caused Me such trial and difficulty. Yet I knew that no matter what it looked like in the natural, love was more powerful than hate, truth was more powerful than lies, and that My Father was in full control, and would—in His perfect time and way—avenge Me, avenge Himself, and bring about justice in the truest, purest, and most complete sense of the word.

175. I knew from much time spent with My Father that the only way to truly be a victor and overcomer on Earth was to trust, follow, and obey Him completely through every test, no matter how personal or difficult. His ways truly are higher, better, and more right than any man's. I knew that no matter how I felt at the moment, how "wrong" or "unfair" something seemed, the best way was My Father's way. In order to be the most effective witness possible, I had to be a sample of His ways—the ways of love, forgiveness, mercy, truth, endurance, temperance, meekness, and faith.

176. So while I know it's not easy, I know it's possible. I know that just as My Father helped Me, so can I help you and give you the grace, patience, love, faith, wisdom, and whatever else you need to be a sample of the heavenly way. The world knows too much hate, darkness, bitterness, revenge, and anger. What it desperately needs is a true, living sample of My light, love, forgiveness, mercy, tolerance, and everything that is true, loving, and pure. I need you to be that sample.

177. I ask you to claim the miracle-working power of the keys I have given you to help you rise far above whatever personal hurt, anger, or upset feelings you may have. I ask you to be a true and total disciple by putting love above all else, as I did. I ask you to follow My example, to use this as an opportunity to let Me possess you more fully. I ask you to let Me work through you so that together we can save as many as possible and reach as many as possible.

178. I ask you to give no place to the Devil via his feelings of anger, hatred, bitterness,

desire for revenge, or negativity. I ask you to continue to take steps to become even more like Me, more heavenly minded, and thus more powerful warriors for the faith.

179. It's like the scene in the "Jesus 2000" movie where I said to Peter, "You're a strong man, Peter. Are you strong enough to love?" That is the question I ask each of you now. The answer is whatever you choose to make it. If you want to be strong enough to love, I will be right there to help you, to change your heart and attitudes if necessary, to fill you to overflowing with My love and power, and give you all the help you need and more. You will be empowered, given strength, and brought up to an even higher level of faith, fruitfulness, and fulfillment. The choice is yours.

180. (Jesus:) Don't ever stop praying for a change of heart for your enemies. Even those who fight you and persecute you are not beyond hope. There is still a chance that some of them will change and make a turnaround in this life, and the only way they will have that chance is if you pray.

181. Remember the story of Saul in the Bible, who later became known as Paul. He was the most active persecutor of Christians at the time, and had made it his life's goal to see Christianity stamped out. But because so many of My children prayed for their protection during that dangerous time, and also beseeched Me in desperate prayer for Saul to have a turnaround, all of those prayers created the power I needed to transform him and make him a new creature.

182. I'm not saying that all of those who are actively fighting and persecuting the Family are going to have such a miraculous transformation as Paul did. Many will not have such a change on this Earth. But there are some who will be changed, who will stop the damage they're doing, and who will repent of their activities to hurt and harm My children, if you pray. I'll repeat that: **If you pray.** It is possible for you to see a "Saul" turn into a "Paul" if you

will pray desperately and fervently enough for that miracle.

183. **Don't ever lose hope and give up on your loved ones, no matter how bad off they are, no matter how lost they seem, and no matter how many bad choices they appear to make.** Remember that I am the God of miracles. I'm the God of all flesh, and there's nothing too hard for Me.

184. **If the conditions are right, and if you're praying for your loved ones desperately, then you can expect to see more miracles of deliverance and transformation.** According to your faith, manifested through desperate prayer, be it done unto you.

Forgiveness, redemption and usefulness

185. *(Question:)* **Some of the young people in our Home were wondering about something the Lord brought out in a prophecy in the GN concerning Ricky.** He said: "Ricky is not at peace yet, for the reality of his error is very painful for him, but he will eventually have the peace he desperately seeks. He will be taken through his time of cleansing and full repentance slowly and gently, for there is much that his spirit must be cleansed of. But in time, all will be well with him, and he, too, will eventually help from the spirit world" (ML# 3530:57, GN 1120).

186. **Some of the young people were wondering how the Lord is going to be able to still use Ricky after all that he has done to hurt people, and even kill someone.** Of course, we can't even begin to fathom the depth of the Lord's love and forgiveness, and we know it is there for anyone—always. But this was a bit of a choker for some of our young people, and could be a question others have as well.

187. *(Jesus:)* **I know it is difficult to understand the full depth of forgiveness, especially when you're dealing with forgiveness of such heinous sins as murder.** It's hard for the carnal mind to fully comprehend, and it's not always

easy for human hearts, feelings, and emotions to forgive. I understand this, because My carnal mind and My human heart had to pass the forgiveness test as well.

188. **My faith was greatly tested at Gethsemane, where I made the final decision to follow through and die for you, to take the sins of the world on My shoulders.** I could have run. I could have escaped before the guards arrived. But I passed that test and won that victory, only to face another great test.

189. **Next I faced Golgotha, where I had to make one of the most difficult decisions of My life, to forgive My Own murderers.** I was still in human flesh, still subject to human thoughts, feelings, and emotions. I was tempted to curse those who nailed Me to the cross, and to instead yield to revenge. My flesh was tempted to get even. I wanted to call down armies from Heaven to wipe out the whole lot of those who mocked and persecuted Me and cast lots at My feet. I had the power within Me to do so. I was tempted, but I didn't give in to the temptation. I called out to My Father in desperation, and His voice spoke so clearly to My heart and said, "My Son, You must forgive."

190. **I was torn between wanting to handle it My Own way or do as My Father willed.** But when I heard His voice speak so clearly to My heart, I chose to forgive. It was at that very moment that peace flooded My heart and I received the power to forgive. First I had to choose, then the power was given Me.

191. **I forgave the criminal who hung beside Me. I promised that he would be with Me in Paradise.** I asked My Father to forgive those who put Me to death, as I also forgave them. I forgave My Own murderers, just as I forgive others who commit such crimes. This was My mission on Earth—to not only bring you My love and save you from your sins, but to teach you to forgive.

192. **Take a minute and think about forgiveness. What is its purpose?** One of the main benefits of forgiving others is that

it helps the one who is doing the forgiving to let go of their own anger, bitterness, and resentment. This is healing. Another benefit, as My Word clearly teaches, is that you cannot receive forgiveness yourself unless you forgive. And another benefit, and one which is most often overlooked and is one of the fundamental purposes of forgiveness, is that forgiveness equals redemption. When I forgive you your sins, I am also redeeming you from the clutches of Satan.

193. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought the woman who was caught in the act of adultery before Me, I did not condemn her. I forgave her, and with that forgiveness I also gave her a command to go and not sin again. There was a purpose for that woman's life, and as I forgave her, that purpose was regained.

194. My forgiveness is redemption. I have forgiven Ricky, and in so doing I have reclaimed him. I have rescued him from darkness. What would be the purpose of rescue, if there was no further mission for the rescued? Those who are forgiven much, love much. And this great love moves them to accomplish a great deal for Me. Naturally, all of this ties in with repentance. But now that Ricky's eyes are opened to the true realities of the spirit world and he has come face to face with My light and the truth, I assure you that he seeks repentance with tears.

195. There are countless examples in the Bible and throughout history of how those who were forgiven went on to accomplish a great work for Me. It was after Moses killed the Egyptian that he went on to lead My people. David and Saul (Paul) were both responsible for taking the lives of others. Yet I forgave, and they were transformed and mightily used of Me to bring many to righteousness. Many missionaries have set out to evangelize savage people, those who have committed horrendous crimes, and have won converts who, when redeemed, became strong witnesses for Me.

196. To forgive is divine love, and through forgiveness I redeem My Own. I rescue them from darkness so that they can accomplish My will. So it should not surprise you when I say that I will use Ricky in the future, or any others who have committed such crimes. You have precedent for this in My Word and throughout history.

197. And remember that there is a very big difference between usefulness in Heaven and rewards. Yes, Ricky has lost many of his rewards because of his choices. But after his full repentance and rehabilitation, he will be used of Me. Everyone in Heaven is used of Me, no matter what they did on Earth or what mistakes they made. Being used is not necessarily a reward. Sometimes the way I use someone is a part of their reward. But for some, it can even be a form of punishment, if the way I use them is an avenue for them to make amends for the things they did on Earth.

198. Rewards are medals of commendation for acts of love, sacrifice, and obedience on Earth. Being used and serving Me is simply a way of life in Heaven. There's a big difference between the two.

Did Dad die an alcoholic?

199. (Question:) The rumor still seems to be floating around that Dad died "a premature death from being an alcoholic." Even though Mama addressed this somewhat in "The Way Things Really Are in WS" (ML #3309:339-43, GN 911), since the rumor is still going around, does the Lord or Dad have anything to say about this?

200. (Dad:) People used to say that folks who can't be great men and women want to tear down those who are. I suppose they think that by criticizing them for all their faults and failings, they'll cut them down to their own size—which is pretty small, I must say. But even more than the effect it has on the one being criticized is the effect it has on the critic.

It just shows how small and petty and jealous the critic is, and makes him or her even smaller and more despicable. It shows their smallness of mind, exposes their bitterness or envy, and says a lot more about them than the one they're criticizing.

201. Well, criticism doesn't bother me much nowadays. If the world criticized the Lord and even crucified Him, they'll do the same to His servants, whether it's verbally or physically. It's a badge of honor, really, when you're persecuted for righteousness' sake.

202. Yes, I was an alcoholic once, and I confessed that to the Family. Back at the time of the RNR I got an infection in my throat, I got discouraged over all the folks who were leaving the Family, and I drank too much, both to try and kill the infection and to kill or numb the pain I was feeling over some of our defectors. These reasons, of course, weren't legitimate excuses for overdrinking; in fact, it wasn't wise at all for me to rely on the crutch of drinking instead of on the Lord, which He very clearly showed me. I damaged my throat and my esophagus a bit, and my stomach, but the Lord pulled me through it, thank the Lord! He healed me and raised me up, although I often had some trouble with my esophagus after that, as you know.

203. In the years that followed, I never drank to the extent that I did at that time. In time I wrote the Family about my problem, had prayer and overcame it. In the years before I came Home, I gave up drinking completely and no longer drank at all.

204. I did not die a premature death from having been an alcoholic. I died because it was my time to come Home to be with Jesus. I let go and gave up the ghost because the Lord showed me that Mama was ready to carry on without me, which has certainly been proven true. Isn't she doing great? I could die—although it's really passing from death to life—because I knew the Family would be able to carry on without me, and you folks are doing great too.

205. Alcohol had nothing to do with my death. I died in my sleep and had a wonderful Homegoing, and drinking played no part in hastening my death. In fact, I lived years longer than I ever expected, and decades longer than the doctors expected. When I got double pneumonia in the army, the doctors expected me to die then, but the Lord healed me completely when I said I'd live for Him, and He kept me going for more than 50 years after that! The Lord keeps His promises, let me tell you.

206. My problems with alcohol were long past when I died. The Lord kept me and healed me and preserved me for His work's sake and for your sake. He extended my life rather than shortening it, because I loved Him and obeyed Him, and loved others and did all I could to help them love Him too.

Faithful disciples

207. (Question:) How do you ensure that you will remain a faithful and loyal disciple? I really want to be a good disciple, stay true to Jesus, and continue serving Him, so how do I stay on the straight and narrow path?

208. (Jesus:) Seek to believe, My dear loves. That is the best path to take, the safest path, the most pleasant path—the path of faith. Go to My Word and feed from it deeply, daily, to strengthen and maintain your faith. Make love with Me and try to remain close to Me, for I am faith. Ask Me for the gift of faith, for it is available for you at your request. Ask Me for spirit helpers to strengthen and bolster your faith, to protect your faith, to keep you from the Devil's pests of doubt and disbelief.

209. If something causes you to doubt, search My Word to see what it has to say on the matter, finding both faith and truth therein. Come to Me and ask Me to speak to you on the subject. Ask for counsel or prayer from others, or both. Hang on to Me and My Word, clinging tightly till the battle has passed. If little unanswered questions remain, wrap them

in a bundle of faith and set them aside, knowing that they will either be answered in the future or, when you unwrap them then, they will be gone, having vanished.

210. Do not let your questions grow in the darkness, like mushrooms, for there the Enemy will nourish them. His fertilizer is the same as that which nourishes mushrooms on Earth—dung. He will pile on his manure in an attempt to make your doubts grow stronger and multiply.—And they don't become fruitful as they multiply; they grow ever more destructive and harmful and poisonous.

211. Throw open the windows of Heaven and expose your questions and doubts to the light of My Word, to My heavenly answers through prophecy, to the love and light and counsel of your Family. The quicker you do so, the quicker these doubts will shrivel up and die, and the sooner good fruit can spring up in their place.

212. Doubts do not automatically lead to disbelief and rejection and betrayal, but they can if they are allowed to grow and spread and flourish. Why risk it? Whether they simply lead you down the path of unhappiness and anguish of mind, or down the path that leads to the world, or down the path that leads to fighting the Family and the faith you once held dear, reject them. Fight your doubts rather than the Family. Doubt

your doubts rather than your faith. Expose them to the light and watch them shrivel and vanish, like the vaporous fictions they are. Nourish and grow faith in their place, and travel the path of trust and belief, for it is a happy one.

Spreading the Truth

213. (Jesus:) My ministry on Earth, My loves, was to individuals.

There was no such thing in those days as newspapers or TV. Word was spread from individual to individual. There's a lot to be said for the personal witness. So if you're doing your best to change the world one heart at a time, giving out the truth one heart at a time, then it's My job to ensure that truth spreads and reaches those who need it. And believe Me, My loves, it does. I've had firsthand experience with that, through My ministry on Earth.

214. So just keep getting out the truth, even if sometimes it seems that it's to one person at a time. That's the way this war will be won—one person at a time, one heart at a time, one bit of truth at a time. Truth will always conquer the lies.