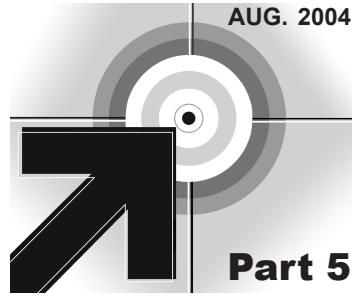


Shooting Straight

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

FD/MM/FM 3503 7/04

Belittling the Family Way?



Part 5

The issue:

SOME Family members have very little respect or appreciation for the things that set us apart from the world, considering them simple or embarrassing or sometimes even strange. You sometimes belittle such things as our Family music, Family tools, our belief in spirit helpers, our health standards, our views on godly sex, etc. You have the attitude that everything in the Family needs to be cool, professional, or match up to the standards of the world in quality, style, etc., and if it doesn't, then it's dumb or stupid or something to be embarrassed about, ashamed of, or even to make fun of. It's gotten to the point that some of you no longer appreciate the things about the Family that make us different from the world, especially those that promote the simplicity of the Gospel.

God's mind on the matter:

2. (Jesus:) This is an attitude of the world that has crept in. To put it simply, much about the world is designed to look as attractive and desirable as possible. It's made that way to be the "here and now," albeit temporary, reward for those who will serve the Enemy by being fodder for his System machine. They wouldn't do it without benefits, and the benefit is that he tries to make the lifestyle, entertainment, and frills as attractive as possible. It's their time of reward. For some people, the "goodies" of this earthly life are all the "rewards" they'll ever have.

3. For you who are going to receive the bulk of your reward later, it is true that for the most part there is no way that what I provide for you in the way of entertainment, lifestyle, and diversions will compare with what the Devil is offering his people, if you're looking at things in a carnal way. And there isn't much I can say except that if those things mean more to you, then you already know where the door is, and Mama and Peter are certainly holding it wide open for those of you who think this way.

4. I'm sorry to put it like that, but what else can I say? If you're willing to see that no matter how simple or

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plain a Family song may be in style, it's the spirit behind it that matters, which moves you and quickens you and excites you, then you understand. Or if you're willing to forgo the extra "coolness" that the world seems to have in every area in preference to living the discipleship life, then you get it. But if you can't get past the desire to turn everything that the Family has into being more and more like the System, then I'm afraid you do NOT get it, and won't ever be able to understand those who do.

5. The Family isn't designed for the purpose of being cool and fun, although I give you lots of fun and grant you many blessings. The world is set up that way—at least on

the surface—although its pleasures are fleeting and lack true fulfillment. The Family is designed for disciples who are willing to sacrifice pretty much day in and day out to get the job done. Part of that sacrifice is the acceptance that your goal and mission in life is not to compete with the world, and so the ways you go about accomplishing your job for Me will often seem simpler, if you're judging by worldly standards. So, although it's not wrong to try to make cool music, or design up-to-date pubs and websites and outreach tools, or dress in a manner that is current, yet appropriate to your field, if you're judging on a purely physical level, you will never excel in these things to the degree that the System does. That's not what your life is all about, and I can pretty much guarantee that no matter how well you do in some physical area, there will be a System alternative that is more attractive.

6. In order to make it—and be happy and satisfied—in the Family, many need to have a radical change of attitude in this area. Family members need to learn to treasure what they've been given. It's so hard to do when you're standing on this side of the fence looking at all that green, green grass over there, but through the keys, and through taking on My mind, it will be possible. It is possible to learn to love the spirit that saturates the Family, and to love even the simple and quirky things about the Family simply because it's My way, it's what I've asked, and because there are spiritual and physical blessings that come from doing it that way.

7. Another huge factor in learning to revel in the “Family way” of doing things is to have less of the System. Of course, that sounds like censorship and control to some, or like fear that if you ever tasted “real life” you'd never be able to go back. Well, in some ways that's true. The System is one giant trap, where the entire thing is set up to get you to exchange your eternal benefits

for some temporary pleasure. Unless you're really careful, if you do too many things the “System way,” chances are high that you'll probably start to really enjoy it that way and not be content with the way I've asked you to do things. My ways will start to look simple and uncool to you.

8. I'm not going to proclaim and try to convince you that everything in the Family is so much more enjoyable in the flesh, and that what I have to offer you is comparable from a carnal standpoint. I love you enough to honestly tell you that if it's only carnal thrills you're after and you only want them here and now, those of the System are probably more attractive to you than Mine. The Family has less to offer in the flesh, if physical satisfaction is what's most important to you. For this reason I have asked you to separate yourselves, to touch not the unclean things, to stay pure and untouched by the world's entrapments, or they will do just that—trap you.

9. The pleasures, satisfaction, and rewards of the spirit are so far beyond anything the flesh can offer that they are beyond compare, but it takes being willing to forsake the thrills of the world before you will truly experience the thrills of the spirit. It takes time to make that adjustment; it takes changing your taste buds. But after experiencing the pleasures and satisfaction of the spirit, you'll find that you're really enjoying the simple physical things that are part of your way of life too—the freedom, the joy, the fellowship, the special blessings and rewards I give you when you're serving Me with your whole heart. And even the simple physical things, when blessed with My Spirit, are so much better than anything the world has to offer. It's just that you can't compare them, because if you're judging from a purely physical, carnal standpoint, you can't relate to the spiritual element and how that enhances and contributes to your pleasure, satisfaction, contentment and joy.

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

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10. Spiritually there is no comparison.

The happiness and joy that I will give you is light years beyond anything that the world can offer. Fulfillment, peace, love, satisfaction, knowledge, truth—there is no way that the world can compete with Me in those areas. It takes discipline of mind and body to learn to treasure those things above the sights, sounds, tastes, and pleasures that the world has to offer. It's a matter of satisfying your heart and mind more than your five senses. When it comes down to it, that's really all the world can give you—temporary satisfaction of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. But beyond those things, nothing the world has can satisfy the other cravings in your soul.

11. It takes commitment to learn to not indulge your senses in temporal pleasures to the detriment of strengthening your heart and spirit. But when you put the things I give you first and learn to do things My way, even if it is simpler or not as fancy, you'll see that I fulfill your other needs too. You might need to learn contentment or adjust your preferences—as healthy food doesn't always taste as good as junk food, Family songs aren't always as flashy and complex as System songs, and Family living might not seem as exciting and desirable as System lifestyles—but those things won't matter to you once you've decided that those temporary things aren't as important as satisfying the needs of your heart and spirit.

12. However, part of that changeover process has to be a lessening of the world's input in your life. You'll never learn to appreciate My alternatives as long as you're still trying to enjoy what the world has, and murmuring about what I give you. If you want to learn to be happy long-term with the full Family lifestyle, you will have to take time to reject whatever it is that you crave so much from the world, and work hard to learn to appreciate My way instead. It's an acquired taste, but once you have it, you won't want to go back. It's a more sophisticated taste, and like other things of that nature, it might seem

funny at first, but once you develop it, you'll see the lesser quality things for the junk that they are. *(End of message.)*



13. (Jesus:) Everything that I've got to offer is so much better than what the Devil has to offer, but it doesn't always seem like that. The Enemy's offerings are very flashy, and at first seem very desirable. They look cool and they're enticing, but when you get up close and sample them, you find that they are cheap trinkets, just plastic in comparison to My jewels. Mine might seem a little plain, but it all depends on your perspective.

14. It's similar to how little kids will often go for the cheap, flashy costume jewelry that seems so pretty and nice, even choosing it over real jewels. They haven't grown up and learned to appreciate the things that are of true beauty and worth. Their tastes have not matured. Well, the world is full of spiritual babies, and their tastes are along those same lines. So when I say that there is no way that what I provide for you will compare with the world, I'm only talking about those who are looking at things from the immature perspective of the flesh. *(End of message.)*

In summary:

15. (Mama:) We aren't competing with the world or the way they do things. Our treasures and riches and "perks" are spiritual, as well as eternal. It's an acquired taste and requires discipline and commitment to put the needs of your spirit above the desires of your flesh, but you can learn to appreciate the way we're different, and even be proud of it, realizing the greater purpose in it all, the greater goal, and also the reality of what we're looking forward to and going to enjoy forever!

Key promise:

16. Call on the keys to help you desire the treasures of the spirit above all else. The more you desire My Spirit, the more everything else will fall into perspective.

Dig deeper:

- “Mountain Men,” ML #B:4–17, DB 4
- “Don Quixote,” ML #198, Vol.2
- “Glamour or Glory,” ML #328, DB 6
- “Keep It Simple,” ML #2774, DB 11
- “How to Answer Intellectual Questions,” ML #2794, DB 11
- “To the White House Singing Team,” ML #2863:2–8, DB 11
- “Man Looketh on the Outward Appearance, Part 1,” ML #3124:61–69, Lifelines 24
- “Be a Missionary,” ML #3135:86–122, Lifelines 24
- “Issues, Part 3,” ML #3302:12–28, GN 904
- “Are You a Disciple?” ML #3365:69, GN 963
- “Issues, Part 9,” ML #3380:81–85, 88–90, 94, GN 987
- “The Professionals,” ML #3399:131–132, GN 993
- “Recognizing and Resisting Pan,” ML #3401:35–41, Post-it GN #3
- FJWL 2: #167, 186
- DM 1: #62, 189
- “The Christian’s Relationship to Worldly Society,” 1, 2A, 3, Word Basics
- “Simplicity,” Word Topics

Challenging That:

17. (Dad:) There’s no reason to be in the Family halfway. There’s nothing at all in it for you if you’re trying to be as worldly as you can, yet keep your status. If you want to be in the Family, you’ll enjoy it most, have the most power, and receive the biggest rewards if you go all the way—all the way in mind, heart, doctrine, belief, practice, and example.

Does Good Parenting Even Pay Off?
The issue:

18. (Note from an SGA mother:) Should I even hope that my kids will make it serving the Lord? It seems like no matter how great the parents are, some kids have turned out really wrong, and I find myself wondering

if it’s foolish to hope so much, work so hard, pray so fervently, when others have done that and it didn’t work.

God’s mind on the matter:

19. (Jesus:) When you’re looking at your children and making decisions about their care, look at the big picture. Don’t just think about today, or even five or ten years from today. Look at their long-term destiny and what I have planned for them—not just for today, but for the future.

20. Regardless of the choices your children make five or more years from now, even if they are wrong choices, your children will be used of Me when I have need of them. Even if they choose to leave the Family, the input and training and love you’ve given them will never be lost. Even if they were to one day choose to ignore it, or put it aside, or lock it up in a chamber of their heart that they never enter, it will still be there—ready to be unlocked when it’s My time. All of the good, all of their training, all of their input, will still be a part of them, and when the time is right I will unlock that reservoir of training and put it to use when I really need them.

21. You must not gauge success as a parent by whether or not your children turn out to be disciples or remain in the Family. Success as a parent is doing your best, giving your all, pouring into your children with every ounce of strength and love you have, and trusting Me for the outcome. The outcome, according to their decisions, may be that they choose to live in the world and live for themselves for a time. But even that is not the end of it all. There will come a time when even these young ones will be drawn back into My service. Reread the message in “Mama’s Birthday 2002, Part 2” about your children being arrows in My hand. [Note: In the “Dig deeper” list that follows.]

22. The Enemy wants you to look at the veteran parents and draw the conclusion that because of the choices their children have made, all of their sacrifices, all of the

training they gave their children, and all of the blood, sweat, and tears that they invested was in vain. The Enemy tells you, “Look at the ‘good’ all their hard work did.—Really nothing. Look at their kids now. They’re living for themselves in the System. So why should you work so hard and fight so determinedly to give your children the best discipleship training you can? You’re fighting a losing battle.” Sometimes the children are even fighting the Family. So it’s logical to assume that being a good parent, raising your children as disciples, and giving them the best input you can doesn’t really make a difference in the long run, because according to their choices they can just let it all go down the drain.

23. But, you see, that’s where you’re wrong. Your children’s training, the input they received, the love they received, the truth they were privileged to know, it never goes to waste. It doesn’t go down the drain. It doesn’t disappear. It doesn’t ever come to naught. It will always remain in their hearts in that secret chamber I just talked about. Even if they’re choosing to pretend there’s nothing there anymore, it’s still there. There’s nothing they can do to get rid of it.

24. So if they received even a little bit of good training as a child, it’s there in their heart. If they received a lot of excellent training and input as a child, it’s there too. And then when it’s unlocked in My time—even if that time is during the Endtime, or in the Millennium, or some time in the Hereafter—it will be put to use. So the more you can give them today, the more you can pour into them, the more love you invest, the more spiritual truths you teach them, regardless of their future choices—even their wrong choices—it will be put to use one day. It will never be lost.

25. Those children of dedicated parents that you look at today as wayward, as having “thrown all of their good training away,” as having been a wasted investment, even these have the secret chambers in their hearts that are filled with truth. You don’t see it from the surface, but it’s all still there, just

hidden away for the time when, through their repentance and purging and My perfect timing, it will be unlocked, and their lives will be flooded once more with the wealth, truth, and beauty of My Spirit. It’s something that they will never be able to get rid of or throw away. Some things in life are never wasted—things like love, My Word, spiritual input, spiritual training, time spent reaching out to others, and especially time spent pouring into children.

26. Don’t give up! Don’t let the problems or difficulties along the way cause you to pull back in your fervor and determination to give your children the very best discipleship training you can. No matter what the obstacles, no matter what the future holds, this is the best decision you can make as a parent. Even if you sometimes feel it is in vain, it is not.

27. You’re giving your children things they will never lose, things that will never grow old, things that will never fade away—living gifts of the spirit that will always be a part of their lives, even if they lie dormant for a time. The gifts of My Spirit—love, time, training, and truth—can’t be destroyed or thrown away. They’re permanent parts of your children’s lives that they will never lose. So don’t you lose faith, or the vision, or sight of the big picture! What you give to your children, what you pour into them, will last forever! (*End of message.*)

In summary:

28. (Mama:) All that you give to your children now is never wasted, even if they become wayward or make wrong choices in this life. Pray for the long-term vision and the ability to see things as the Lord does, and faith to keep giving them your best. It’s an investment in eternity!

Key promise:

29. All that you need to raise your children in My love and heritage is yours when you call on the keys. Loose the power of Heaven by praying fervently and committing their needs to Me, and it shall be done!

Dig Deeper:

- “The Silver Lining,” ML #3166:39–52, 87–113, Lifelines 24
- “Drawing the Line,” ML #3241:52–67, GN 843
- “They’ll Always Be Mine,” ML #3300:51–66, GN 899
- “Mama’s Birthday 2002, Part 2,” ML #3445:87–93, GN 1030
- “God’s Greats,” ML #3478:26–34, GN 1065

Challenging That:

30. (Dad:) Ask yourself, “Is the Devil afraid of me?” He’s your enemy, and you should be looking to destroy him just as much as he’s looking to destroy you. If he’s not afraid of you, then what’s wrong? Are you a threat? You should be! Satan and his demons should tremble and shake when they see you coming, not snicker and laugh behind your back because you pose no significant threat!

Bad Influence?**The issue:**

31. (Mama:) Someone wrote me and shared the following, and I think it’s something many of you parents can probably relate to:

(From an SGA mom:)

32. My kids are no picture of saintliness, and it’s a full-time job to keep their minds clean, keep them focused on the things of the spirit, keep them growing, etc., so I often struggle with exposing them to other kids who are a negative influence, because it’s just so much work to stay on top of everything they pick up and learn from their peers.

33. I don’t want to be secluded in my blessings and not reach out to help other kids when the Lord leads, even if that means more of a fight with my own kids, to shepherd them properly. But it’s overwhelming sometimes to be fighting what appears to be a losing battle.

God’s mind on the matter:

34. (Jesus:) Your children’s interactions with others, and the whole other dimension this brings up and the extra shepherding it requires—this is a part of My training for your children, and My training for you as a parent.

35. The key, and what you must find out from Me, is if it is My will. If it is My will for your children to interact with certain other children and I’ve confirmed it—whether it’s unavoidable, or whether it’s what I’ve asked you to do to reach out, or whether it’s part of living communally and helping to bear one another’s burdens—then I will use it to grow them up and to teach you and your children.

36. I’m not talking about your children hanging around other children who are very obviously not doing well spiritually, who are not changing or not being seriously motivated to change. In other words, if their parents and situation are allowing things to continue on in a bad state, then often they’re not good for your kids to be around, because it causes them confusion—if others are allowed to continue in bad behavior with no consequences. Or if children have very severe behavioral problems, even if they’re working on their problems, it’s sometimes better for them to be separated from other children until they do make some progress.

37. You do not have to feel obligated to let your children fellowship with such children if I confirm that they’re being a negative influence. You don’t have to remain together in the same Home if the other parents aren’t open to disciplining and improving the standard in the children’s lives, and abiding by the abundance of Word I’ve given on the topic. If you can’t agree on a united discipline standard, you will not be a good strong Home, nor a winning team.

38. If you study the Letters on this point, you will realize that it’s well within your rights to not allow such contact if the contact would be very detrimental to your children, and if no good would come out of

it. It's a matter of praying and hearing from Me about which children your children should have contact with and which children they should not have contact with, and then sticking to those guidelines the best you can.

39. It's a fine line. You don't want self-righteousness to creep in and hinder your decision-making, and you also don't want to keep your children away from any other children who have problems lest they also grow to be self-righteous. It's good for your children to sometimes come into contact with children who aren't as strong as they are spiritually, so they can learn the very important spiritual principles of conviction and standing up in the face of peer pressure, etc. These are hard things to teach children, but they are essential qualities for disciples to possess.

40. With love and prayer and prophecy, make your decisions. Do not make your decisions based on what is easiest or most logically right. Call on the keys of wisdom and love. Sometimes love means getting a little bit dirty in order to help someone else. Sometimes love means letting your children reach out to others, even if it requires more shepherding afterwards. Sometimes love is meeting the needs of others to your own hurt—or to the hurt of your children. But love is also drawing a line when necessary and being honest when necessary. To know what kind of love to manifest in every situation is only possible through knowing My mind on the matter. So just ask Me. (*End of message.*)

In summary:

41. (Mama:) Interacting with other children, and helping your kids learn the important discipleship lessons of conviction, standing up to negative peer pressure, lovingly interacting without self-righteousness, etc., is part of your training and your children's training. But there is a balance, and sometimes the Lord might show you that some contact is not good, but is a negative influence. Call on the keys of humility and love

and prayerfulness, and make your decisions based on what the Lord shows you, and He will be able to use any situation for your and your children's good.

Key promise:

42. Raising children, and handling the many different scenarios that come with that territory is challenging, but as you call on the keys of love and wisdom, you will have all you need for any situation you face.

Dig deeper:

- "The Devil's Challenge to Our Garden of Eden," ML #2526, DB 10
- "Mama's Memos, No.6," ML #3156:15-49, Lifelines 24.
- "Start Early," ML #3274:145-167, GN 878
- "Keep Fighting," ML #3366:67-115, GN 969

Challenging That:

43. (Jesus:) All that you need is at your disposal, through the keys and the weapon of praise, combined with hearing from Me and receiving My specific instructions. So no matter how difficult or trying, if I've shown you that something is My will for you, you will be rewarded with victory if you persevere with the weapons of the spirit I have given you. No evil, no difficulty, no obstacle, no device of the Enemy can stand against them!

Delinquent Parents?

The issue:

44. (Mama:) Many of you still have wrong thought patterns when it comes to disciplining your children. You have a hard time maintaining a godly standard, and you find all kinds of excuses why you shouldn't/can't/don't want to discipline your children and teens. This is true of you second generation parents who have young children and you first generation parents who have rebellious teens.

I know there are many excuses and “reasons,” but neglecting to discipline your children and teens is failing them. It’s a lack of love for them. It’s being shortsighted, and depriving them of the standard and boundaries they need. It’s compromise and disobedience on your part.

45. I’m not talking about reverting to self-righteousness, harshness, or inappropriately severe discipline. I’m talking about loving, godly discipline within the guidelines of the Charter. You young parents don’t want to overdiscipline, so you wind up going to the other extreme. You first-generation parents don’t want to make it even tougher on your teens who are already having a rough time, and you’re afraid that they’ll hate you or leave the Family if you make them toe the line. I know it’s difficult, but it’s inexcusable to ignore or neglect this part of your responsibility as parents and shepherds.

46. I’m not going to get into this in detail, because the Lord has already said a great deal on this subject in Letter after Letter, and gotten into the finer points. But I am going to share with you a sobering message from Eli, who, as you know, failed his sons, and it cost them their lives, and in the end it cost him his calling, anointing, and the Lord’s blessing.

God’s mind on the matter:

47. (Eli:) In speaking to you, I speak from my heart as one who faced the same battle many of you face at this moment. Please take heed to my experience.

48. If anyone had good “excuses,” I did. My wife died in bearing Phineas. For many years the sight of him was too painful to bear, so he and his brother were given into the hands of my dear wife’s sister. She loved them dearly, and because of the place of honor they would undoubtedly have in the temple when they were older, they were given the best of everything. They were allowed privileges that I now know no child should be allowed. They became selfish, shallow, foolish and rebellious. They saw themselves as above all

others and above the law. I wish I could say I didn’t know of these things, but I did, and I did nothing to stop it.

49. I didn’t want to get involved and chose to allow them to be raised as others saw fit. When they came of age, I couldn’t postpone the day of reckoning any longer and I had to bring them into the priesthood to begin their training. At first I was shocked at their behavior and deeply pained that I had allowed this to go so far. Yet I lacked the conviction to punish them for their sins.

50. The longer I excused them, the duller I became in my convictions, and the weaker the people became. I lost the conviction to correct anyone. It wasn’t the way I began. I was on fire with the Spirit of the Lord. I judged with equity and conviction, but in excusing the sins of my sons, I lost the conviction to punish anyone else. I would see my sons’ faces in them and I couldn’t bring myself to deal with the evil that was sweeping the land.

51. It was at this time that the Lord came to me. He warned me of the dire consequences that would follow if I chose to allow my sons to continue in their sins. He told me then that I must take them in hand and correct the seed that had been planted in them before they became worse.

52. How I wish I could go back and undo what I did then! I feared that my sons would only hate me if I forced them to change their ways. So I instead turned them over to my servants to care for, only seeing them when I had to.

53. The years passed. I knew they were not changing for the better, but I chose to hide from the truth until they had fully come of age and began serving as priests, even though they showed nothing worthy of such a high honor. They were as children in their foolishness and deceptions, which they would work on others until their place was called into question.

54. I stood up for them against those who would have removed them. The pain

in my heart for what I had come to think of as my failure caused me to shield them even when they desecrated the tabernacle of the Most High.

55. Before this time the Lord had warned me that I was failing in their care and failing in my care for the people. My protecting of my sons was to the people a message that God was protecting their evil and siding with them.

56. If I had only listened. When I was allowed to see them later in the spirit world, I was able to understand the terrible thing I had done in their lives. Because I refused to deal with the situation and address issues with my sons while they were on earth, it became necessary for the Lord to destroy their bodies to save their souls. They missed a chance to make things right in this life because of my refusal to train them, to spell things out and give them the truth—God’s views on things—and teach them the difference between right and wrong. Because I failed to give them the needed discipline that would have brought them to a place of decision where they would have to make a choice and reap the rewards or consequences, this caused them to go so far astray, there was no remedy.

57. I saw then what could have been, had I obeyed the Lord’s instruction and taken the difficult road of correcting them. They would have rebelled, as I knew they would, and would have lost their place, but the humiliation would have brought forth repentance after a time, and they would have suffered so much less. I only saw the moment. I saw the potential suffering if they turned their backs on me and on the Lord. I didn’t see the torment of spirit they would have to endure because of my failure to do what the Lord told me to do.

58. I stand before you now and beg you to not fall into the same pit I fell into. In my case, my refusal to do as the Lord had instructed me concerning my sons caused me to compromise further and further. I had been called in my youth. The Lord had placed

a great task in my hands, and had I obeyed concerning my sons, I would have been like Samuel. But instead I sank into infamy as a dandy bad example of the fruits of disobedience.

59. Samuel also faced this battle with his sons, but he chose to correct them. Though they rejected his correction and turned away, the truth Samuel gave them did not return void and later made their way easier, while my boys had a much harder time, having lacked a foundation of truth because I never spelled things out to them. They made much slower progress even when they arrived in the spirit world. I’ve had to carry their suffering in my heart, knowing that if I’d chosen the path that I knew in my heart was right, the way of the truth and of conviction, their way would have been much easier.

60. You have to go against what your carnal mind reasons. Your children must make their own choice. Your job is not to make it for them, but to set the standard clearly before their eyes so they may make the choice, knowing full well what is expected of them. You cannot force them to do what you know is right, but you must make it clear to them.

61. It is your job as their parent to help them to clearly understand the consequences and rewards of either choice. Then, if they choose the wrong way and see what you told them comes to pass, they will know that yours is the right standard, and in time this seed will grow and draw them back to the Lord. *(End of message.)*



62. (Jesus:) It’s so important for you to be faithful witnesses on Earth—to deliver your souls to those I bring across your path, to train your children faithfully and equip them with all that they might need to make the right decisions, to speak the truth in love to your brothers and sisters when they’re straying or getting off track. Please do it now and make things right now rather than waiting, to the point that it has to be made right in Heaven. *(End of message.)*

In summary:

63. (Mama:) Failing to discipline your children and teens is only going to hurt you and them worse and worse as time goes on. Even if they rebel against your discipline now and make the wrong choices or seem to go farther away, it's still your duty as a parent to teach them right and wrong and help them to feel the consequences of their actions. Eventually they will be thankful, and so will you. Compromising as a parent in the area of disciplining your children can also lead to more compromise, and in Eli's case it eventually destroyed his ministry and usefulness to the Lord.

Key promise:

64. I have created the keys of conviction and obedience to help you face the hard choices and come out with the right decisions and conclusions, and as you continue to call on them, they will give you the strength to follow through.

Dig Deeper:

- "Delinquent Parents," ML #1708, DB 2
- "Hold on to the Reins," ML #3239, GN 841
- "Start Early," ML #3274, GN 878
- "Are You a Delinquent Parent?" ML #3388, GN 984
- "Solutions for Parents, Shepherds, and Everyone," ML #3389, GN 985
- "What Is Full-time Discipleship, Part 2," ML #3469:431-451, GN 1056

Challenging That:

65. (Dad:) You should know by now that the easy way is not usually the right way. Conviction generally requires sacrifice, and is more difficult than taking the road of compromise. So for God's sake, and your children's sake, claim the keys for long-term vision, the ability to see beyond today to the rewards and blessings and promises of tomorrow, and then you'll have strength to obey and follow through on what the Lord shows you is needed.

"I don't want to be in leadership."**The issue:**

66. (Mama:) Many of you of the second generation have negative attitudes toward being in leadership. There are various reasons you don't want to be "leaders" or "shepherds": perhaps because you saw a bad sample of leadership in the past, or because you don't want to appear "spiritual" or be looked on as "self-righteous" or "stuck up"; you don't want to have to stick up for your convictions in difficult situations or buck peer pressure; you're afraid of losing your friends or of gossip being spread about you; you know it's hard work and you don't want to lose your free time, or because there is so much familiarity with your peers, etc.

67. Right now many of you are adamant that you will "never be a leader." Because of this, among other things, you're missing out on training and the challenge it could be for you to grow in this way, you're running away from what might be the Lord's calling for you, and the Family is severely lacking in good, trained, capable leadership, and is suffering for it. Those who are in leadership are in most cases overextended and not able to do the job as well as it needs to be done, because there's too much to do and not enough people are sharing the load.

God's mind on the matter:

68. (Dad:) Look, kids, when the Lord calls you, He calls you, and there's nothing that you can or should do about it except to obey. I've heard and seen that a lot of you are adamantly opposed to serving the Lord in any kind of leadership position, and you avoid it like the plague. Well, say what you will about the rigors and difficulties of leadership, but refusing to consider any aspect of your service for the Lord is just plain disobedience and unyieldedness.

69. You can't have places that you will not go for the Lord. He is a strict command-

er and He requires complete obedience. And even if He's not asking you to go somewhere and lead people at this time, He still doesn't like to hear you say that if He did ask that of you, you wouldn't go.

70. Believe me, I understand the fears or reservations you may have. I had'm too. I had times in my life where I was dodging the Lord's call to be a shepherd to His flock. But in the end, if that's what the Lord has in store for you, then you can't avoid it without disobeying Him and stepping outside of His will. It might not be your idea of fun or your idea of a career, and it might seem like the last thing in the world you want to do, but if it's His plan for you, then that's that. You can't say no to God. I found that out the hard way as you've read in my testimonies about joining the army or when I temporarily passed on because of my poor decisions.

71. You can't afford to have untouchable areas in your life, because then the Enemy can use those things, those chinks in your armor, to expand his little area of Huddersfield, and to search and try to find what other things you won't do for God, and what other things he can make you refuse to do for the Family. Yes, leadership and shepherding is hard and it's not for everyone, but if you're God's man or woman at God's time, then He will give you the grace and the talents and anointing for it if you'll only say yes to Him.

72. You might say, "What about 'So You Want to Be a Leader?' Dad? What about your counsel to not want to be a leader but to enjoy just being a private and a little person while you still can?" Well, that Letter and concept of letting the Lord be the one to call you still applies. If people are trying to promote themselves or attain some kind of position of perceived power, God doesn't bless that, and chances are those aren't the sort of people He wants shepherding His sheep anyway. So that Letter is still very applicable today, and if you're called to something that you feel is "smaller" or "lowlier" than what you would

prefer to do, then you should be content doing what God has asked you to do. That was the point of that Letter.

73. But I think that some of you might not be remembering the message of that Letter clearly if you think it gives you license to turn down the Lord when He calls you, or that you can badmouth the position of leadership and declare that you would never go there no matter what. It's simply dangerous for a Christian to have those kinds of attitudes. You have to be open to anything when it comes to the Lord, and that includes leadership. Shepherding might be the last thing on your mind, and you may think you have none of the talents or skills necessary. That's fine, that's no problem. It's good to be focusing on your task at the moment. But should the Lord ask it of you, then you do have what He's looking for or He wouldn't call. God doesn't make mistakes, and if the Boss calls you into His office looking to give you a new job, who are you to say no?

74. Until that day arrives, if that's not your task or your burden to carry, then don't worry about it. Stay positive and busy for Jesus in the job He has for you right now. But for God's sake, please leave yourself open to whatever the Lord may have in your future, because a great many of you who consider yourselves "little people" now are going to need to be His shepherds in the soon-coming future. Don't sabotage that future by hardening yourself against a certain aspect of His work, or prejudicing others through your negative comments.

75. The Bible says to fret not for the morrow, and that's good advice that applies in this situation. Don't fret about what God might ask you to do at some point in the future, but instead keep practicing yielding and obeying day by day in whatever ministry you're currently filling. That way, should God need you for something different in the future, even if it sounds like a pretty tall order, you'll be in the groove of doing what Jesus tells you when He tells you—not tell-

ing Him that you'll do this and this, but not that or that. The Lord doesn't like to have servants who talk back and give Him their own list of demands and presume to tell the Boss what they will or will not do.

76. You've gotta leave yourself open! You've gotta have faith! You have to trust the Lord that He knows what's best for you and what you're capable of. If you think you'd make the world's worst leader, then fine, don't worry about that, because you're not the one picking the leaders anyway—God is. He's the ultimate judge of talent because He looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart. The Lord knows who He needs, and if He needs you, then you need to go and be willing to learn whatever is necessary to make you into the leader the Lord wants you to be. That's all there is to it. But for now, for today, for this minute, if that's not His request, then just let it be. Trust the Lord and obey what He's asking of you today, knowing that if it's His plan later, you'll be ready with a yielded heart, and then God will do His part to make you ready by giving you all the gifts and talents that He knows the job requires.

77. Just trust the Lord. Amen? Don't fret yourself for tomorrow, and don't boast yourself for tomorrow. God's Word warns about either of those things. Don't say that you'll for sure do this in the future, and don't say that for sure you won't, either. Just do what God says today, and let Him worry about tomorrow. Does that sound like good advice? Well, it should. It's God's advice, and it's His plan for you. *(End of message.)*

Additional reading:

78. (Jesus:) I want and expect every young person in the Family to view leadership and shepherding as part of their commission and calling in the Family.

79. From the very beginning your Father David harped on this topic. Though many of you take his letter "So You Want to Be a Leader?" as an excuse to shirk this call-

ing, I inspired him to write that to impress upon you that leadership is a tough and high calling, and though you may not want to be a leader, I want you to be a leader. And, whether you like it or not, as a disciple in the Army of David, one day you will be a leader and shepherd—if you are willing to go all the way for Me.



80. (Jesus:) I've said this before and I will say it again: The negative attitudes that many of you second generation have toward being in leadership have just got to go. You need to read the Word on the subject and see how many times I have repeatedly given counsel toward this very end, that of you taking on a shepherding and leadership role.

81. You must expunge the negative attitudes or thoughts that may come to your mind when you think of leadership—such thoughts as self-righteousness, legalism, unfairness, miscommunications, rules, perfection. Replace them with these qualities that I expect of My leaders in this new day and age: honesty, humility, love, spirit-led freedom, giving, leading, wisdom, sacrifice, and yieldedness.



82. (Jesus:) My prayer for the children of David is that not only will they be open and willing to be shepherds and leaders when I call them to be, but that they will realize that this is the reason I have brought them into the world at this time, and have invested years of training in them; it's for this very purpose. You will lead the armies of Christians in rebellion and final victory over the Devil's leadership of the wicked of this world. That is what I have called you to, and there is no greater calling or prize than to be at the forefront of this battle.

83. I have called you the elite, the called-out ones, the officers, the vanguard. Will you shirk your duty and push the untrained foot soldiers to the front, or will you lead the charge to face the Enemy head-on?

That is what I expect of you, the children of David. If you are not willing to take up the challenge, I will give it to others. (*End of messages.*)

In summary:

84. (Mama:) The Lord knows what He's doing! Don't say no to Him! If He calls you to be a leader, He will also work in your heart and life to prepare you, and will give you the anointing when you need it. Stay open, stay flowing, stay obedient. Keep saying yes to Him!

Key promise:

85. Before I return to take you out of this world, you will face many challenges that appear too large for you, but I've given you the keys for just such situations. Whether the challenge is in your mind and a test of your faith in Me, or whether the challenge is an actual physical obstacle or circumstance, the keys have the power to see you through. Call on them for every need, problem, difficulty or challenge.

Dig deeper:

- "Labor Leaders," ML #161:1-8, DB 5
- "Mama's News and Views, Part 1," ML #3046:78-83, 86, 89, Lifelines 23
- "Issues, Part 4," ML #3306:73-104, GN 909
- "The Action Series, Part 3," ML #3308:72-78, 104-124, GN 908
- FJWL 2: #255

Challenging That:

86. (Dad:) Nothing in this life is worthwhile compared to the Lord's will and His thoughts and His ways. Nothing this present life has to offer could ever compare to the fantastic rewards awaiting His 110%ers. Whatever you give up can only be counted as your "reasonable service" for the One Who has given so much for each of us. Fight to retain that in your thoughts, Jesus is worth it! Sacrifice for Jesus is worth it! Nothing of this world could compare to what Jesus has to offer.

Begrudging Leadership Support

The issue:

87. (Mama:) We've heard that some of you begrudge the support that those who hold a position of leadership receive in order to enable them to do their job. For example, regional board chairs and COs receive a monthly gift to help support their Homes, cover their travel expenses, etc. It's not nearly enough, not even close to what they could really use, but it's something. And yet some people begrudge them even the small amount they do get, or resent the fact that they receive monthly support, feeling that it's unfair.

God's mind on the matter:

88. (Dad:) I want to address the negative viewpoint that quite a number of you have in resenting the fact that some leadership—the COs and VSs and the regional board chairpersons—receive a monthly gift from WS. Their monthly gift isn't that much, and it's not nearly enough to support them and their Homes, travels, and ministry, yet you complain and feel that it isn't fair that they get anything at all. You feel that they should be getting out and raising their own support and that WS funds should be spent for "other things." After all, if you have to raise all of your support, why aren't they out there raising their support?

89. It makes me pretty sad when I hear our Family members voicing these self-righteous comments. When it comes down to it, that's what it really is. It's self-righteousness. It's thinking that you know better than the Lord, because if you were Him, you wouldn't give these gifts to leadership, or at least you would use those funds "more wisely," and would require leadership to raise all of their own support on top of doing their duties as leadership.

90. Beloved, let me tell you, you should be thankful for your shepherds and the

fact that they are willing to do the job they do for so little “pay.” The job of leadership is a difficult one, and unless you hold the position, you have no idea what a heavy responsibility it is! It’s not fun and games, and they aren’t sitting around doing nothing. They are out there laying down their lives for you each and every day. They are thinking about you and praying for you and the Homes in your area. They are focusing on your children and your young people. They are organizing activities and events in your area. They are working to provide you with the tools to do the job and support your Homes.

91. They are doing all of this on top of having to care for their personal families, help shepherd, run, and yes, support their Homes, report to their overseers, and the list goes on. I don’t know how you think that the leadership who give so much for you and sacrifice so much could do without the gifts that they receive. On a practical level, they would absolutely not be able to do their job. It’s as simple as that. You would have no leadership, no boards, and pretty soon there wouldn’t be any Family as you know it today, organized and going places, without them!

92. Your COs and regional board chairpersons have a huge job—much bigger than most of you realize. And it’s not that they are just given that responsibility and it’s left at that. They are held to a high level of accountability as well. They answer to someone and are required to fulfill the obligations of their position. The support they receive isn’t nearly on par with the responsibility they are expected to carry and the accountability that is required of them, and yet they do their job because they love you. They love the Lord and want to see the Family progress and move forward. They are willing to lay down their lives and their own desires and serve you.

93. Now, I realize that your leadership isn’t perfect, and from time to time they aren’t the perfect example in every area of

their lives. They may at times even spend their gift for something that you feel they shouldn’t. But who are you to judge? Isn’t it the Lord’s job to tell them what they should spend His money on? God has given them the job and the responsibility, and they are accountable before Him to perform that job. And He obviously knows that they need the gift that they receive. There are a lot of things that you don’t see, so you’d do well to beware of judging a matter that you don’t see all sides of.

94. What does the Word say about this very subject? Let me quote you some scriptures on the matter. Here’s a good one: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine” (1Tim.5:17). And, “The workman is worthy of his meat” (Mat.10:10). How can you argue with that? It’s very clear in the Word that if leaders are doing the Lord’s work, they should receive their “meat,” which in their case is a very small gift in comparison with what He’s asked them to do and what they are giving in many ways. These are God’s laws and have been set down in His Word for a long time. (See 1Corinthians 9.)

95. You’re all doing the Lord’s work, and isn’t He providing for you? You may have to work for it in a different way, but in order for your leadership to be able to devote time and resources to you, they need the gifts that they receive, and He trusts them with those gifts. That’s what it comes down to. If the Lord and I, through Mama and Peter, trust them with these gifts, why are you begrudging them?

96. I’ve always said that the pocket-book nerve is the most sensitive. It’s so easy for the Enemy to come in and sow division in this area. It’s putting so much importance on money that is the problem here. Your Husband has got tons of it, and He can and will give it to those who are obedient and following Him and His will for their lives. Money is not a problem to the Man upstairs. Do you have needs? Is your Home strug-

gling? Is that why you're comparing and complaining? Well, the Lord can supply in greater abundance than you can imagine. Are you putting too much emphasis on money to the point that you're missing the mark, and missing out on the Lord's blessings in your life and Home and supply? If you're focusing so much on money to the point that you're comparing and being negative or critical about the money that your leadership receives, then it's a sign that you've lost faith for the Lord to supply all your needs.

97. If you have been harboring these things in your life, you need to get them out in humility and wash them away with faith, which comes through the Word and brings on our Husband's blessings in your life.

98. "Anything you need you have access to through the power of the keys." You have no idea what that really means. The human mind can't comprehend the full meaning in that simple key promise. There is so much power there, and all you have to do is reach out. The Lord's supply is there for you, and I guarantee you that you will never be in want if you follow and obey Him. You might have to pinch pennies here and there and give up some of your "wants" now and then to make ends meet, but He will always come through for you. God's guarantees are true and sure. It's all there in the Word. Read it, live it, and let your faith for His supply grow until you are overflowing with His blessings in every way. *(End of message.)*

In summary:

99. (Mama:) Your leadership need a gift in order to enable them to devote time and travel and resources to serving you. The gift they receive is not nearly enough, but they cheerfully bear the additional weight and responsibility out of love for the Lord and you. God bless them! Instead of looking at what they get and comparing, examine your own heart and life and see if you may be lacking in faith for the Lord to supply for you in the areas He wants. If you're being negative or

critical or begrudging, that's probably limiting His blessings right there. Get your heart right, strengthen your faith, and let the Lord supply for you too!

Key promise:

100. Claim the keys of obedience and cleansing to help you become the disciples I have called you to be, for your obedience will activate the keys of supply. When your hearts are right, when you are obeying Me, when you are putting first things first, there is nothing I can't do for you or give you, My faithful brides!

Challenging That:

101. (Jesus:) When all My Family look and act like the New Wine revolutionaries that they're called to be, then I will flood upon them the sheep, the success, the finances, the rewards, the power, and the greater works that I have in store for them.

Accomplishments and Work Are Not How the Lord Judges Success

The issue:

102. (Mama:) Another wrong attitude that crops up is when people think that doing well in their work is all that matters, or when they make their work their prime priority, to the point that they neglect the principle of "love is the most important thing." It can and has become a works trip and workaholic mentality with some people, where they measure their "success" by accomplishments and how productive they are, and things like showing love or taking time for people are almost considered a distraction of the Enemy. Even if you're very busy—and very busy doing the Lord's work, no less—the Lord expects you to love others and take time meeting their needs. And, get this: He values your love above how much you get done. It's easy to forget that with all the pressing business there is to do.

God's mind on the matter:

103. (Jesus:) At the end of your life when you come Home to see Me, what do you think I'm going to care about the most?

Do you think that I'll say, "Well done, you sure got a lot done; enter into the joy of your Lord," if those successes came at the price of neglecting loving interaction with your brothers and sisters?

104. I'm talking to those of you who get so focused on the work and all that you think you need to do that you start to see your brothers and sisters as hindrances to your progress. I'm talking to those of you who push aside the most important aspect of all—love—in preference to getting "one more thing" done on your to-do list. I'm talking to those of you who are so accomplishment-oriented that you've forgotten that you're on Earth to be love-oriented, and that without love, nothing else you do will profit you anything.

105. I know you all remember 1 Corinthians 13, right? Those aren't just Paul's words; that wasn't just his personal standard, or just true in his personal life. Those words came from Me. They are too beautiful and true and everlasting to just be Paul's own idea. They were directly inspired by Me, because they show how I feel; they expose My heart and how I judge when it comes to accomplishments vs. love. It says that if you do all those things, but don't have love, it profits you nothing. No profit = no good. Do you understand? That means that things done without love, or things accomplished at the cost of showing love and compassion and care for others, are unprofitable work—a waste of time, idle work, useless work, work no better in My eyes than the idle words you'll have to give account for.

106. No profit means that it didn't help you any. You might think that your haste and hurry and the lacks in your kindness and consideration of others will be justified in the end, but they won't be. The end will not justify the means. You can rush through life "getting stuff

done," but you will have failed if you don't take time to care for others, to love them, to be Me for them, and to even delay the more important things you have to do in order to show those immediately around you that you care about them and their needs and that they matter to you.

107. I know that many of you have important jobs for Me, important duties for the Kingdom, and I thank you for being such faithful servants. But being a faithful servant, as important as that is, is not a higher priority than obeying the first two commandments. Those are your highest priorities of all: to love Me and love others. No matter what your to-do list says, you should always imagine that written above your top priority are two extra items: Love Me and love others. Getting your first priority done without doing those extra two means you really only did third best, which isn't good enough. That's failing in My books.

108. There's nothing that can compensate for a lack of love. There are no works that you can do which will make it okay that you didn't care for those around you. There's no task that is so great that I'll say it was okay that you treated others rudely or roughly or like hindrances to your plans in order that you could accomplish it. And since you cannot make up for a lack of love, the only solution, if you want your life to amount to anything in the next world, is to show that love. Love is life. Love is the only way to live. The greatest of these is love.

109. Some of you might think that what you're doing is manifesting love for Me via your hard work, or love for the lost via the works that you are doing to bring them to salvation. That is true in many cases. Yet even those works cannot supersede the personal love that I want to show to those immediately around you through your personal acts and words of kindness to them. It's like John said about not being able to love Me whom you haven't seen, if you can't love your brothers whom you do see (1John 4:20).

110. So don't let the Enemy trick you into thinking that whatever you're doing is more important than love. Being too hasty or rude, or being short-tempered with people, making people feel unimportant, being impatient, being too busy to smile at someone or show My love in other ways, all these things will render your task meaningless in the end. I will not look at it and say, "Well, you weren't kind, you weren't loving, you didn't have charity, but boy oh boy, you sure got some stuff done, so it's okay." That's a deception of the Enemy when you think that way; it's not how I work or judge things.

111. I want you to stop for others, to make people feel important, to make people feel that you care about them, and that regardless of how busy you are, they matter too; they matter even more than whatever project it is that you're working on.

112. I'll close this message to you with some other words, perhaps less known than those of Paul, but also inspired by Me. They are found in Charles Dickens' novel, "A Christmas Carol." I helped to get this message into that story, because it is so vitally important, just as much now as when it was written, and even more so because the world is getting so much faster, and people's hearts are growing so much colder.

113. In the story, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of Jacob Marley, his old business partner, who expresses to Scrooge how much regret he has in the afterlife that he didn't show more charity, that he wasn't a better man, or in so many words, wasn't more loving. Scrooge tries to comfort him by pointing out his good points and saying, "Well, you were always a good man of business." Or as you might put it today, "You always got a lot of stuff done." But Jacob Marley replies, "Mankind should have been my business."

114. How about you? Is mankind your business? Is your top priority to love others?—Even above the press of your daily work? It'd better be, or you too will be filled with regret that your works have turned to ashes,

and without love, you have nothing to show for all that other stuff you did.

115. Start today to make a change! Learn to love others! Make that your top priority, your business. Go full-time into the business of love. Love is what the Kingdom of God is made out of. Therefore if you're loving, you're seeking first the Kingdom of God! And then the promise will hold true that everything else—all the success you need—will be added unto you. (*End of message.*)

In summary:

116. (Mama:) To be successful, fruitful, accomplished, blessed, rewarded, and wind up with fruit that remains: Love!

Key promise:

117. When you call on the keys of prioritizing, I will help you see in the spirit, and will remind you of the true priorities in life.

Dig deeper:

- "The Greatest of These Is Love," ML #1371:10–14, DB 1
- "Lessons of Love," ML #2975, Lifelines 22
- "Mama's New Year's Talk," ML #2986:38–99, Lifelines 22
- "Mama's Love Story, Part 1," ML #2992:75–84, Lifelines 22
- "Prophecies on Leadership," ML #3052:40–58, Lifelines 23
- "Cast Your Cares on Him," ML #3242:70–77, GN 844
- "Action Through Prayer, Part 2," ML #3325:13–17, 82–86, GN 930
- "Leadership Lessons, Part 2," ML #3385, GN 982
- "Obliterate Obstacon," ML #3434:35–39, GN 1017
- FJWL 1: #341, 388, 398
- 1John 4:7–12, 16, 20–21, Bible

Challenging That:

118. (Dad:) Always remember, no matter how busy you are, how important the work is, or how great your calling may be,

love is the most important thing! Without love, all your good works are worth nothing to the Lord. Without love, all your accomplishments are empty ashes. Love is the only thing that's going to endure beyond this life. Love is the only thing that lasts. Love is what you're on Earth to learn above all. So love!

119. (Dad:) The ways of the world can be appealing at times, but the true revolutionary is repulsed by them because he knows they are in direct contradiction to God's way. He rejects the vain and ungodly mindset because he cherishes his higher calling and committed mindset. You've chosen God's way, so hell with the ways of the world!—They'll never satisfy the radical flame within your heart. The world sickens you because you just want Jesus. He's all you need, and that makes you a deadly force against evil. The more you go all-out for Jesus, the more the attachments to the world will fade day by day.

Flaws in Physical Appearance Marring Your Life and Interactions with Others

The issue:

120. (Mama:) Some people are so pre-occupied that a certain part of their body or physical appearance is not the way they like it, that it makes them uncomfortable and awkward around others. It prevents them from reaching out and being the Lord's love to others, I imagine it hinders their ability to witness freely and powerfully, and it probably also keeps them from really doing the humble thing in their interactions with others, because they're so self-conscious and wrapped up in themselves or worried about

themselves all the time. When you're worried about yourself, you're not very happy, but many people feel that if they just didn't have this or that flaw, they'd be happy. They blame their unhappiness on circumstances, or something they want to change in the physical about themselves or their situation.

God's mind on the matter:

121. (Jesus:) So many of My brides struggle to accept the way I have made them or what I have planned for them. For some it's manifested in dissatisfaction with their physical body or some aspect of it. For others it is a discontentment or discouragement about their personality and talents. For others it's a struggle to be content with their place in life, My will for them, their circumstances. For others it's all these things together.

122. I made each one of My brides special, and I made no mistakes. Those things that are weaknesses or "flaws" were put there by Me or allowed by Me for a reason. If you go back and read some of the messages and insight I've given you in the Family about your decisions before you go to Earth, you'll have a new perspective on why you're each made the way you are.

123. Some "handicaps" or "weaknesses" were put there by Me for a special reason, to teach you something special, to bring out some inner strength, beauty, wisdom, and maturity, or to make you a vessel capable of extraordinary usefulness, which you wouldn't otherwise achieve.

124. Other "flaws" or difficulties were chosen by you. Yes, that's right. You chose them before you went to Earth, because you saw things more clearly at that time. You saw the triviality and worthlessness of the things of Earth, and you desired so much more the things of the spirit. There are certain qualities of spiritual strength and maturity and experience that are only gained through your time on Earth, and you chose to take on handicaps of the flesh in order to gain the strength of the spirit.

125. But then, after going to Earth, of course those remembrances faded. You're caught up in the thoughts and feelings and priorities of Earth and the flesh, and it's hard to accept certain things about yourself. It's hard to keep working toward the goals that you and I set together before you went to Earth. It takes a lot of faith. It takes a lot of humility to accept that this is the way I made you. It takes a willingness to step back from the things of Earth and see things through the eyes of the spirit. And these are things that don't come naturally to anyone in human flesh. It's a fight.

126. Some of you are dissatisfied with your physical body, or preoccupied with one part of it, to the point that you want to do something drastic to change it, and you feel that if you can't change it, you don't have a chance at real happiness. But consider whether, even if you could change it, it would really help you to be happy. Would it help you to achieve your long-term goals—the strength of spirit, the rising-above ability, the humility and unselfish love, the maturity, the wisdom, the inner beauty that you chose to strive for while in Heaven? Would it make you a better and more understanding vessel of My love to others? What kind of testimony would it be?

127. These are choices only you can make. But when you are so unhappy with something about your body or your place in life, stop and think deeply about what I'm telling you here. Think not just in the short term, your life on Earth, and how it might make you feel immediately. But think of this in the long term, think of what you are on Earth to do—to grow in spirit, to gain experience and spiritual maturity, to grow in love, in humility, in unselfishness, to bring others to Me, to show them My love, to enlighten them to the ways of Heaven. Would changing things about yourself help you to achieve those goals, or would it distance you from them?

128. Many of you dislike many things about yourselves. Some of you don't like your size or shape. Some of you don't like your skin.

Some of you don't like your hair. Some of you don't like your personality. Some of you don't like your teeth. Some of you don't like your breasts. But in most cases, My solution is not to go the route of artificially changing the way I created you. Yes, I encourage you to exercise and maintain a healthy weight. I encourage you to take good care of your temple. But I also encourage you to let Me shine through, to become so full of My love and My spirit of faith and happiness and encouragement and unselfish love that those around you hardly even notice your flesh—and if they do, they love what they see, even if to you it's not beautiful.

129. What everyone around you needs from you—and I really mean everyone—is unselfish love, true friends, understanding, faith, encouragement, someone who is interested in them and loves them for who they are. The solution is not to one by one change the things you don't like about yourself, but rather to get so full of My love for others that others don't even notice those things.

130. Right now, many of you feel that it's some aspect of your physical body or appearance that's holding you back from being comfortable around others. But the problem isn't really physical at all. It's your pride, selfishness, insecurity, comparing, and unrealistic expectations for yourself. You can change your physical characteristics all you want, but it's your spirit that bonds with others and feels true fellowship and camaraderie. It's your spirit that becomes fast friends with others. It's your spirit and My love in your spirit that draws others to Me and helps them open their hearts to My salvation. It's your spirit that makes all the difference.

131. So even if you were able to make extreme physical changes, you would find that it didn't really change all that much. If you want a change in your life and the way you feel toward others or when around others, it's your spirit that needs to change. And the way to change your spirit is to become more full of Me and My love and My Spirit. That's what's really going to make all the difference.

132. Remember too that there are special things you wanted to learn on Earth.

These are things you decided and desired when you could see things much more clearly through the eyes of the spirit than you can now. So even though you don't remember all those things, try to stay focused on the goals of the spirit—the attributes which will remain a part of you long after your earthly body is dead and gone—the beauty of spirit which you are building day by day through your choices of love, humility, and unselfishness. That's the beauty that will last forever.

133. Cultivate the desires of your spirit, and give your spirit to those things that will nourish it and strengthen it. Exercise your spirit through stretching yourself to be more unselfish, more giving, more willing. Feed your spirit well with the nourishment of My Word. Bathe in My cleansing, revitalizing elixir which washes away the old and dying and gives way to the new. Rest in My arms. Share your spirit with others so that it becomes experienced in loving and stays practiced in how to love. All these things enhance your spiritual beauty and give you a shine that will remain for all eternity.

134. So regardless of how much you like or dislike your physical body, the most important thing is to feed and maintain and nourish your spirit. When you're trying to change things in the physical, consider: Does it help you to reach your spiritual goals? Does it make you more beautiful in spirit? That's what you should be most concerned about.

135. And remember, My dear ones, you're the way I made you, the way you chose to be, and you're beautiful to Me. (*End of message.*)

In summary:

136. (Mama:) If there's something about yourself that you really don't like and just can't get over, instead of struggling with it in the physical, ask the Lord why you have it—why He gave it to you or why you chose it yourself. Then focus on what

you can gain in the spirit through the situation, and it won't be so annoying anymore.

Key promise:

137. Praising Me, calling on the keys, and being willing to do the humble thing are three “beauty tips” that do wonders for your spirit.

Dig deeper:

- “Revolutionary Women,” ML #250:9–20, DB 5
- “But If Not,” ML #313, Vol.3
- “Living the Lord's Law of Love, Part 9,” ML #3209:268–310, GN 812
- FJWL 1: #145, 160
- FJWL 2: #23, 452
- “Beauty,” Word Topics

Challenging That:

138. (Jesus:) You're beautiful to Me because you're My bride. That's all there is to it! The more you love Me, the more you're willing to do the humble thing, the more beautiful you become. So forget about everything else, and just be Mine! That's how you'll find true perfection and satisfaction!

139. (Jesus:) How will you face the famous martyrs, missionaries, Christians, and heroes of the faith who gave their families, fortunes, bodies, and lives for Me, if you have to say that you couldn't make the small sacrifices that were asked of you, and for that reason you failed in reaching My best? How will you face those who were tortured and killed for their faith, if you have to say that you couldn't forsake a small earthly pleasure, or lay aside a little weight of sin, or make a small personal change in order to really champion My cause and win the victory? Think about that as you make these choices of faith.