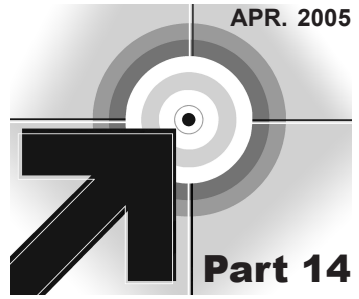


Shooting Straight

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

By Maria

FD/MM/FM 3538 9/04



Part 14

Dive Into the Fountain of Youth!

The issue:

With many of us FGAs in the Family getting on in years, different folks have different attitudes regarding this.

Some of you are of the opinion that as you get older, you shouldn't be expected to do as much for the Lord as was expected of you in your younger years—it's the, "Because I have been serving the Lord for so long, I deserve a break!" mentality. I'm not necessarily talking about physical work or abilities. Naturally, as you get older, you can't do as much physically as you used to; that's a fact of life. But I'm talking about the attitude that you've sacrificed so much for so many years, and you're now getting older, so you shouldn't be expected to sacrifice as much, or be as dedicated or militant spiritually as you were in your younger years, and maybe you deserve a slower pace—not just physically, but spiritually as well.

God's mind on the matter:

2. (Jesus:) I am saddened by this attitude—one which is so contrary to My truth and all that I have poured into you, My children of David, these many years. With Me dwells the eternal fountain of youth, and you who truly love Me, who desire My Spirit and the vitality and youthfulness of spirit that it brings, never grow old; you literally go from strength to strength. You who truly desire to continue growing, yielding, giving, and progressing, graduate from the strength of the flesh to the strength of the spirit, and that strength and maturity keeps on growing, even into the afterlife.

3. You who bring your aging flesh and its weariness and limitations to Me as an excuse for not giving your all, break My heart. How far from the realities and the laws of the Spirit you have strayed in your viewpoint and attitude! This truly saddens Me, that you would choose rather to cling to your flesh as a crutch rather than dive into the fountain of youth with Me, where you could be renewed in spirit and flesh and do more than you did before!

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4. What wearies Me is hearing excuses from the lips of some of you, My brides: "Oh, I'm 50!" or "Oh, I'm 55!" or "Oh, I'm 60!"—Almost as if I should expect less of you, or not require you to give as much in spirit, just because you have reached this age in the flesh. How sad this is, because age doesn't matter to Me; it is of little relevance within the realm of the spirit.

5. Have you, My children, lost sight of the countless examples of this in the scriptures of old, and even the examples of missionaries and great men and women of God in recent times?—Great men and women of faith who lived and bled and sacrificed and gave to Me till their dying day? Have you forgotten how I chose to use Abraham and Sarah to father many nations when their bodies were as good as dead?

6. How you, My faithless loves, would blush if you were here within the realm of My Kingdom, where you would stand alongside great men and women of God who gave their all to Me until the end of their earthly days—some of them into their 80s and 90s. Their greatest years were their latter years, when their flesh was no longer a crutch, no longer a liability, no longer a hindrance, no longer a strength. Then I was ready to use them in a greater way than they'd ever imagined. Then they were dipping into My fountain of youth, and even though their flesh waned, their spirits grew in great magnitude and depth and power! That's when they became My explosions of power and spirit, and brought many to Me.

7. Have you, My children, forgotten My Words? Have you turned your eyes from the truth and power of My Words and chosen to look to the conditions and circumstances of your flesh instead? I know many of you have grown weary over the years. Many of you have very real handicaps and afflictions of the flesh, whereby you have to slow down and aren't capable of as much in the physical realm. But many of you have simply grown weary with trudging the same roads, facing the same battles, and have grown tired of the sacrifice, yielding, and giving that it takes to be one of My Endtime disciples. How quickly you have forgotten that I have promised to do something very special with you who have reached an age of maturity. This is not a time to wind down and be less useful and give less in spirit and dedication.

8. This attitude of expecting less of yourselves spiritually as you grow older has come about through you, My loves, starting to look to your flesh rather than to Me. You get your eyes on the conditions and circumstances rather than keeping your eyes steadfastly on Me and what lies ahead. You partake of the worldly

spirit of "retiring" and "slowing down" when reaching a certain age. Whereas with you, My Endtime brides and missionaries, there is no "retirement" in spirit. Serving Me is a way of life, a life's calling and occupation, just as it has been since the beginning of time for all those who have taken up the calling and profession as one of My great men and women of God, one of My true disciples.

9. The tiring and slowing of the flesh is natural as you grow and mature in years, but certainly that should not be said of the spirit. In fact, it should be the exact opposite! The tiring and slowing of the flesh is a springboard for the maturing and deepening and strengthening of the spirit, which is of far greater worth than the flesh.

10. It takes Me many years to mature you, My children, so that you learn to look to Me and My strength and power, rather than the strength and power of your own flesh or mind. Many tests, trials, and breakings go into maturing My children through the tough school of life's experience. Would I be an unwise and foolish Investor and throw away all that time and experience I have laboriously and prayerfully invested in you, My brides?

11. Those of the world look too much to youth, almost as if it defines character, opportunity, and value. How differently I look at age. While youth and appearance and the condition of the flesh is extolled as a virtue in the world and what people are most fearful of losing, I look only to the spirit. How long and how patiently I wait for the maturing, deepening, and strengthening of the spirit, which can only truly come through the fading and weakening of the flesh. The flesh, with both its capabilities and limitations, has become a crutch for many of you. Unfortunately, even within the ranks of My children of David, it has become a gauge

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

and judge of usefulness, value, and even self-expectation.

12. With some of you, My brides who are maturing in years, Lethargy and Apotheon have managed to gain an unfortunate entrance and hold on your minds and attitudes. How sad this is, that some are of your own accord willingly offering up only half-hearted service to Me as you grow in years, feeling you have “done enough” and more shouldn’t be expected of you. You have succumbed to Lethargy and Apotheon’s pull and drag on your spirit and flesh. For some of you it hasn’t taken too much of the Enemy’s persuasion for you to drift toward succumbing to a spirit of weariness and resignation, while these fiends of Hell are attempting to completely steal your faith that you can look forward, grow, progress, and move on with Me.

13. You have endured so much, and yet now—at the prime of your life, when all that I have allowed you to pass through is about to burst forth into wonderful fruit and usefulness for Me as you tap into My fountain of youth—you are choosing rather to go the way of the world, of letting age dictate your service for Me, your vision, and your faith.

14. Some of you no longer remember your mission. You have forgotten the original intent of the quest, and your eyes are heavy as you gaze upon the condition of your flesh and the sight of more battles to come. The thought of more sacrifice, more yielding, more giving is almost too much for you to bear, so you seek reprieve from Me. You have lost your full connection with Me—your white-hot, alive, and vibrant connection—and so you’ve lost your vision. Then some of you are even tempted to leave your Shangri-La of the spirit—where dwells eternal youth and growth in Me—and consider departing into the elements of the world, where your spirit and flesh will truly die and wither away.

15. How sad that just when I’m getting ready to take all that you have been through

and all that you have learned, and use it in a mighty way in the coming days, you choose to relinquish what is rightfully yours in Me. Regardless of your age, My brides, I have the keys to unlock the fountain of youth within your spirits. You need not travel yet more miles or days or years down the road of service. I have the keys to the fountain of youth for each of you here and now. You have but to desire those keys. You must desire youthfulness. You must desire to keep changing, keep growing, keep being renewed, keep being My disciple, one who follows—which means moving forward, and not settling down in spirit.

16. So to those of you who feel old and weary and find changes difficult, I say, look up! Before you stands the fountain of youth! I am the Fountain of Youth, the Keeper of the Keys of eternal youth. The waters of the fountain of youth are alive, bubbly, and astir with the moving elements of My Spirit. They are not stagnant, restful waters, but they are invigorating waters, infusing strength, fire, vision, and passion into the spirits of all those who seek them.

17. All that is required is your saying yes to Me—yes to the new moves of the spirit, yes to My New Wine, and yes to that which I would ask of you. If you will but say yes, and never concede defeat in spirit by saying no, you will have unlocked the fountain of youth within your spirit, and you will be young all the days of your life! This is the key, My loves: the willingness and desire to continue saying yes to Me. For those who truly have the spirit and heart of David beating in their chests, there is only forward movement, there is only growth, there is only desiring the new, looking to the challenges ahead! Forward march!

In summary:

18. (Mama:) Jesus wants us, as His disciples, to give our all for Him, regardless of our age. We may get older in the flesh and might have to battle a few more afflictions as

the years pass by, and we won't always be as physically active as we were in our younger years. But that's no excuse for slowing down or giving less in spirit, because we have direct access to the Fountain of Youth—our wonderful Husband—Who can keep us young in spirit all the days of our lives!

19. After all that the Lord has invested in us, after all He has taught us in His service over the years, and after the maturity of spirit He's worked so hard to help us gain through experience and lessons learned, it would be a sad loss indeed to throw that all away because we are simply weary of the fight. Those of us who are getting older in the flesh might not be in our prime of life physically, but we can certainly always be living in the prime of life spiritually—by yielding every day, obeying every day, sacrificing every day, tapping into the fountain of eternal youth every day, and saying yes to our Husband every day.

20. Our lives for Jesus on this Earth never end! There is never a time when He wants less of us in dedication and commitment, or when He will excuse us for giving less of our hearts and spirits to Him. The army of David is made up of many different ages—the younger and the older—and He needs us all! There is no discharge in this war; it's a fight to the finish!

Key promise:

21. Claim the keys of eternal youth and you will be forever young—moving, changing, and flowing with My Spirit and being filled to overflowing with the benefits and elements of My youthful, passionate, bubbly Spirit of life and joy!

Dig deeper:

- "A Wonderful Wave of Worldwide Witnessing," ML #154:49, Vol.2
- "Age in Heaven," ML #1826:1–9, DB 2
- "Let Jesus Bear the Weight," ML #2987:91–101, 165–174, Lifelines 22

- "Be Encouraged," ML #3047:84–101, 119–127, 135–137, Lifelines 23
- "Menopause: A Time of Strengthening and Renewal," ML #3127:23–24, 27, 32, 34, Lifelines 24
- "Midlife Victories—Meeting the Challenge Together," ML #3128:68–73, 82–91, Lifelines 24
- "Coming Persecution?" ML #3361:199–213, GN 957
- "What the Hell Is Lethargy?" ML #3482:125–126, 128, 180–181, 183–184, GN 1093
- "Old Age," #2–5, 7, 10–11, 17–18, 20–25, Thots 2
- "Old Age," 2, 4–5, Word Basics

Challenging That:

22. (Dad:) Those in the world are bound by the limitations of age, but God's brides are free! We don't conform to anything else the world does, nor do we accept or practice their ways of living, so why should we think about age the way they do? In God's eyes, old age represents maturity, depth of spirit, a life full of experiences that money could never buy, and a vessel of His making that is more able than ever to do His will and make a difference for His Kingdom!

Retirement Plans

The issue:

23. (Mama:) Connected to the above issue, we have heard from the COs and VSs that the issue of retirement comes up quite regularly these days. It's a big concern for some of you FGAs who are getting older, either because you wonder about it yourself or some of your ex-member children have been bringing it up. It's also a concern for some of you SGAs in the Family, who worry about what is going to happen to your parents when they get much older, and whether or not they will be well cared for without a "solid" retirement plan. You have a hard time trusting the Lord for your parents, and some of you even toy with the idea of leaving

your service for the Lord in order to get a well-paying job and be able to support your parents financially when the time comes.

God's mind on the matter:

24. (Jesus:) The Family has changed in many ways over the years, and over the decades. I have shown you to change many of your methods, your approaches, your structure, and so forth, as you have moved forward; and with each change I usher in a new era, a new phase, and this keeps the Family alive.

25. Some things never change, though, and one of those things that will never change is that you will always need to walk by faith and live by faith if you're going to be My disciples. You're always going to have to keep looking to Me step by step and getting My direction as to "What next?" As your Father David said, "For God's sake, follow God! You're going to have to trust the Lord! It's come to that!" It has always come to that, and it will always come to that!

26. I will in time reveal a more definite plan and give more instructions regarding the care and support of those in the Family who are no longer able to keep up with an active lifestyle, and whose care is not able to be absorbed by Family Homes. Yet that plan is contingent on other future plans and changes, things that have not yet been set in motion, or that have only begun to be set in motion. So you are not yet ready to hear the next step, to understand the next turn, to prepare for the next course of action. I lead you step by step. As you do the things I show you to do, you are then prepared for the next move, the next turn. It's like that with everything about your life, your structure, your plans and programs—and this one is no exception.

27. One thing that I would like to point out is that the move to larger Homes is in itself preparation for My plan, and a step in the right direction of better care for the

older members. Right now, you don't have a lot of people in the Family who are actually "retirement age," but you do have a number of people who have reached middle age, or are in their late 50s and early 60s, who can still do a lot but who cannot keep the physical pace they used to, or the pace of today's second generation. They can, however, still contribute to a community and be a big blessing in many areas. They may not be able to carry what the younger ones consider a "full" physical workload, but they can certainly contribute in wonderful ways to every Family Home.

28. In a large Home, with a good balance of older and younger Family members, those who have more physical strength can contribute to the active ministries that keep a Home running, and the older Home members can have a lighter physical load. That way everyone's needs are met, and the older ones can be provided for and cared for by the community—while also contributing their spiritual gifts and talents and maturity and strengths that they are blessed with. And it's not that they'll just be "mooching" off the community either, because as I have revealed already, they will in many cases be some of your best teachers and leaders of the "in-house church" of those you teach and win, who are themselves a large part of My plan for the Family's support, including the support of the older members.

29. The move to larger communities, which can accommodate more of a variety of people, ministries, and needs, is a big part of My plan at this time, at this next phase, for the care of the older generation. The younger generation, and those of the first generation who are younger and/or more energetic, must learn, at this time of restructuring and change, how to incorporate those who are getting along in years into their communities—how to both avail themselves of their talents and experience and gifts, and utilize them in the best way possible; meanwhile also learning how to care for them

and support them and provide the special needs that they often have.

30. This is a learning and growing experience, and it is meant to be a part of your communal living. A community is a place where the weaker can benefit from the stronger, where the older can benefit from the younger, and vice versa, and where each can bear and share in the workload and responsibilities, according to his or her abilities and strength. A community is not a place where everything must be perfectly equal and where a perfectly “fair” schedule and division of responsibilities must be enforced. That would be one way of doing it, but it’s not My way, it’s not the Family way, it’s not the loving way.

31. At this stage in the Family’s history, it is perfectly possible for those who are moving into a slower pace of life and work—and I don’t like to call it “retirement” because there’s really no such thing in My service, because I always have something for you to do—to find their place, to both be a blessing and be cared for. That is all you need to know for now. That is all the plan you need right now. At the next phase, when it is My time, I will show you the next step.

32. You who continue to trust Me for your future as you grow older, and you younger ones who trust Me for your parents’ futures, will be blessed, for you will partake in the fulfillment of My promises. You will in time see the reward of your faith.

33. Those who feel that they must protect themselves and care for themselves, or who feel they must protect and care for their parents, and who attempt to work it up and figure it out and plan for it in the energy of the flesh, will not experience the same benefits. They may feel more secure here and now, or at some points along the way, but when all is said and done, they will have experienced far more stress, pressure, fear, worry, and even lack, than you who trusted in My promises and who believed Me and obeyed Me.

34. The principle of Scripture holds true in this matter, that, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it” (Mat. 10:39). If you take it upon yourself to prepare for your future and your retirement—or that of your parents—then it becomes your responsibility, your worry, and your problem. Whereas if you trust Me for it, it remains My responsibility and My problem—and that is a whole lot better situation for you, wouldn’t you say?



35. (*Jesus:*) The retirement plan of the System is to quit working when you get old, take an extended vacation, see the sights and enjoy things you never had time for before—if you can afford it, that is—and then devote your full time to doing whatever you want till you die. Of course, not many think of the last point too much, but that’s basically what the plan is.

36. Well, I have much more in store for you, My FGAs, than that! I want you to not only have the cake, but I want you to eat it too. I want you to have a fulfilling life right up to the end, and with plenty of time to enjoy some vacations along the way. I know I sound like I’m preaching the “abundant life” a bit here, but I did come to Earth to bring life, and to bring it more abundantly. The problem is that some people get confused with what I meant by abundantly. I wasn’t talking about worldly treasures and things, but the fruits of the Spirit, those things that really matter and that make such a positive difference in your lives.

37. I don’t want you to retire to insular lives. I need each one of you, My witnesses, to be a witness right up till the End—or your end, whichever comes first. If you stop to think about it, I’m sure that none of you really want to stop being a witness in some way. That is what you have dedicated your lives to and that is the only thing that is going to satisfy you in the long run. You might think other things will be satisfying, and they might bring momentary

satisfaction, but there is nothing more satisfying than fulfilling the great commission. I can say that because that is the way I made it to be.

38. Perhaps you might remember the list that was published of all the great men who didn't come into their life's calling until they were in their 60s, 70s, and even 80s. (See *Good Thots 2*, page 1406, #17.) Most of you haven't even really come into the time of your greatest fruitfulness yet! Most of you are still striplings in the great scheme of your lives. It takes time to train people to reach their fullest potential, and you FGAs, for the most part, are still not there yet. Perhaps it might seem as if life has passed you by, if you feel like you missed out on My great calling for your life, but in reality that is far from the case.

39. Let's look at a few examples. At your age, Moses was hardly even starting his life in Midian as a shepherd. He was in the doldrums from 40 till 80. Then he got his calling. And he died at 120 with his eye not dim, nor, as it was so politely put, his natural force abated (Deut.34:7). Okay, you might not feel you are in the same class as Moses, but believe Me, he didn't think he was in any class at all while he was just a herder of sheep for 40 years! You've already had years of service in your calling and most of you have years left.

40. Look at someone like George Mueller. Dear old George hit the evangelistic and missionary trail when he was 65, and did it for another 17 years. He had spent a lifetime in service before that, and you would have figured that at 65 it was time to quit. Well, he did quit his service in one way, but then he headed out into the most strenuous service he had ever been in for another 17 years. Not bad for a fellow who as a young man had been fairly sickly. Yes, he deserved a break after all those years of running those orphanages and everything else he was doing. So he took one by doing something different; he hit the road!

41. All you dear folks deserve a break, and perhaps you might find yourself without the

energy you once had, but don't let yourself be conned. You still have it in you! In fact, you have it in you to do more than you've ever done—not perhaps in quantity of labor, but in the quality. You have tons of potential still untapped that you need to release.

42. I have also told you that on a spiritual level, through the keys and My promises, you have the fountain of youth available to you. Well, on the physical plane, the key to health and vitality is activity. You are made to be active physically, mentally, and in every way. Inactivity leads to death. Your brain needs challenges to keep it healthy and free from degeneration and disease. When people stop giving themselves challenges, the brain stops having to use parts of itself and starts deteriorating. It's the old principle of "use it or you lose it." Use it to stay young and alive, or neglect it to walk down the path that leads to degeneration and death. Staying active in My service helps to promote a long, useful, and fruitful life.

43. But, as I said, you do deserve breaks. (In fact, you also deserve tons of other rewards, and you will get them, too, but a lot of those rewards can't be given you till the next life.) Be sure to take some breaks, but don't be fooled into thinking that just retiring into one long, unending break is what will really make you happy. It will eventually bore you to death! You aren't made for that. You are made to live a full and active life even into your old age. The big difference is not that you aren't as energetic as you were; the big difference is that you're a lot smarter. The difference is a plus, not a minus.

44. I will say the following—not to make the SGAs feel bad, but just to set the record straight: Someone has quipped that all that energy is wasted on the youth. Well, I had to give them something to compensate for not having wisdom, or at least not that much of it compared to what they're going to acquire throughout their lifetime. So you FGAs don't have to envy the vitality and the energy of the

younger generation. What you have is of far more value.

45. You have to look at your life somewhat like a bank account. You don't usually start with a fortune and then use it up as you get older. You usually start out with only a dollar or two, but then as you go through life you add to it, and by the golden years, if you've been careful, you've built up quite a nest egg.—At least that is the ideal that the bankers like to have you believe. However, when it comes to your life, if you have devoted it to service to Me, as you FGAs have, then this is a true analogy. You end up with many, many times more than what you started with. And unlike the value of money, which can one day vanish through a crash or other economic catastrophe, the value of what you have saved up and are continuing to save can never be lost—unless the Devil cons you out of it.

46. So even if you get tired more easily, that isn't a sign that you're supposed to retire. Take it a little easier in the physical, but not that much. You need the action. You need the work. You need the involvement. And you need the witnessing. It's what will keep you alive and kicking and happy and fulfilled. You've had a lifetime of Christian service, mostly witnessing and being a missionary, and anything less than that is going to be a big letdown in the long run.

Additional reading:

47. (Jesus:) Let Me take a minute to address you younger ones who think that you should get a job to support your aging parents. First, you have a job. It's the best job in the world and the only one with eternal dividends! Don't let yourself be fooled into thinking that working for mammon will somehow supply you with copious cash to care for your folks. Nothing in this world is handed to you on a silver platter, except salvation. All the cash that you think you will have will soon be going out those "holey bags," and all you will do is find yourself in debt and unable to help much anyway.

48. Remember Haggai's prophecy to the Jews because they had gone to build their own little houses while leaving the temple in ruins. Building the temple was the service I wanted them to do back then. I spoke through Haggai and said:

49. "Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. . . . Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (Hag. 1:5–6,9).

50. I have supported your parents for years. They might not have had much at times. Sometimes they really did abase. But as long as they were in My service and in My will, I took care of them pretty well. They weren't always rolling in the cash; sometimes their faith was put to the test, but they never lacked their needs and often their wants. I give enough, but not too much. In the meantime, most of them led lives that the average Joe Systemite could only dream of!—Living on foreign fields, meeting thousands of interesting people, going places and doing things most people will never come close to doing, leading exciting, challenging, satisfying lives. They've had full lives compared to the average person, and their lives and service are not over yet. I still have much prepared for them, and I still have provision set aside for them.

51. I admire your love for your folks, and that you want to help care for and support them, but dropping out of My service to do so is not a solution; in fact, it's a recipe for failure. Invest your time and life in My service, and I will invest My time and life in your service, and into the care of your loved ones. That's a promise.

In summary:

52. (Mama:) In the “Conviction vs. Compromise” series, the Lord explained that the Activated program is a part of His “retirement plan.” And in the preceding messages the Lord says that His call to us forming larger communal Homes is also part of the solution—so that none of our older members are struggling to make ends meet on their own, but can be part of a well-rounded, winning team Home. That’s what He’s revealed so far, and since we have a moving, changing Husband Who continues to lead and guide us as a Family in new ways according to the times and seasons, if we need more information or plans for our older generation in the future, He won’t fail to reveal it to us then.

53. But in the meantime, there’s no need to worry about the future—and for you young people, there’s no need to worry about your parents’ future. Our God Who has never failed us in all our many years of serving Him will not fail or desert us in the future! Our part is to simply continue to live by faith and depend on His care!

54. Thank the Lord we’re not living in the System, where if you aren’t saving up for retirement or don’t have a solid retirement plan, then you’re sunk and on your own. Or even if you think you have a solid “plan,” it’s never really a sure thing, because the System is so unstable. A CO recently wrote me: “You can get the impression that ‘retirement plans’ work for everyone, when really very successful people can also run aground. [One of my friends], for example, just lost their house after a bout of ill health, their business getting behind, money getting low, payments getting behind. So much for their retirement house, which is now gone!”—That’s just one of many, many examples.

55. When you FGAs dropped out to join the Family, when you new disciples drop out to join the Family today—or when you SGAs drop out in spirit to join the Family—it’s

with the understanding that you’re choosing a life of faith. By being in the Family and serving Jesus, you’re choosing to forsake all, trust Him for the future, and live by faith. This kind of life doesn’t come with a “retirement plan” or a “pension plan”—and if you don’t have the faith for that, then the Family probably isn’t the place for you. You aren’t guaranteed to have a stock of money that you can spend on yourself, travel the world with, or fund you to live in seclusion in some nice little cottage at the age of 65! That’s because if you sign up for God’s service, at that age you’re supposed to still be serving the Lord, and if you are, He will still be taking care of you—just as He always has.

56. If you’re getting older and you’re finding yourself having a hard time making ends meet or you’re struggling to “survive,” take a good look at things in your life:

- Are you fulfilling the *Activated* vision and doing your part to feed the sheep and build a solid work?
- Are you living in a large enough winning team Home, so that you can benefit from the support of communal living, while at the same time investing your spiritual gifts and talents in the Lord’s full-time service?
- Do you still have faith in the Lord’s supply, and are you appropriating it through obedience?
- Are you still living by faith, or have you grown to depend more on your own arm of the flesh to supply your needs and pay the bills?

57. Serving the Lord in the Family is a decision of faith from start to finish! Our life for Jesus is a spiritual journey, so it’s dangerous to think that we have to step in and take care of what He has begun, to think that what He has begun in the spirit with His power we have to now finish with our own arm of the flesh by figuring out “retirement plans” and whatnot.

In God's service, we can't bank on anything earthly, but we can sure bank on God's supply, provision, protection, health insurance, and all the rest!

58. We may not have a big stash of money in the bank, but we have a loving and supportive Family, our lifestyle of faith, and perfect security in Jesus. We have the "God factor," the "God plan!"—The best security and most dependable "retirement plan" we could ever have. He also has a great "rewards plan," and He'll more than repay us in Heaven for every sacrifice.

Key promise:

59. I'm your dependable God, your unfailing Husband, and I assure you that as you give your all to Me in full-time service, claiming the keys of faith to believe My promises, you are guaranteed My full care and protection and provision for as long as you live.

Dig deeper:

- "Whose Slave Are You—God's or Mammon's?" ML #1332, DB 1
- "Revolutionary Discipleship," ML #1965:46–55, 57, DB 8
- "The Weakness Revolution, Part 1," ML #3218:198–200, GN 819
- "Issues, Part 2," ML #3297:57–59, GN 894
- "Be Ye Separate," ML #3363:185–220, 225–232, GN 959
- "The George Mueller Story," the section "Later Years," Hope 31

Challenging That:

60. (Dad:) Don't worry about the future! God's got a plan for you! He's not going to throw you out on the street when you can no longer "hit the pavements" for Him. What kind of loving God would that be? He's got the perfect "retirement plan" for each of you! He's the ultimate in retirement planners! He's not just going to give you a small pension to

live on and let you fade into oblivion; He's got the perfect plan for the perfect time.

61. Why worry about retirement? You've got the richest Employer in the universe and He's got your retirement plan well mapped out. You don't need it now because you're not retiring on this Earth! When it's time to retire to Heaven, He'll present you with His plan and all the extra bonuses to boot.

Living In the Shadows?

The issue:

62. (Mama:) There are a lot of SGAs in the Family who are really going places and doing things; you've searched for the Lord's will for your life and you've found it! But there are others of you SGAs—even some of you who are in your late 20s or early 30s—who are severely lacking initiative. You've been relying on the FGA members or other SGAs of your Home, or teamwork, or area, for so long. You've been living in the shadow of others, and in some cases your physical parents, and this is stunting your growth. This type of scenario seems to be especially common in Western countries or home fields.

God's mind on the matter:

63. (Dad:) The Enemy fights you young people from catching the vision of taking on your role as leaders and shepherds, and growing into a place of responsibility. The role of leadership doesn't have anything to do with title or rank; it has to do with a personal commitment to the Lord that you're going to do your part to uphold the standard, stretch when the Lord needs you to stretch, and welcome new responsibilities and challenges.

64. Believe it or not, this lack of initiative to step out and take on responsibility is a worldly influence. It's a subtle calming of the Enemy, to hopefully prevent you, the up-

coming generation, from branching out, doing new things for the Lord, and keeping the fires of revolution strong.

65. History is full of accounts of the new generation starting a revolution, changing the ways of the old, and launching into a new future. Generations of times past were willing to fight and die for that change. But have you noticed over the last years, there have been fewer of these types of revolutions in the world? The upcoming generations are falling into the molds of the previous generations and becoming more duped by the indoctrination of the System. There are few radicals of today's generation really trying to make a difference.

66. The Enemy is trying to use that same approach on the Family young people. He has many active demons and archdemons working and trying to appease any desire to take initiative to make solid progress, to grow, and to welcome responsibility. The last thing the Enemy wants is a rallying call resounding through the young troops of the children of David. But we've got to have the infusion of new life into the ranks! We've got to have those who will be motivated to take on the roles of leaders of the sheep, shepherds to their younger siblings, and visionaries to see beyond the comforts and cushiness of living in these times.

67. Just like the grape is plucked off the vine and crushed and fermented before wine is made, it's the same with you of the second generation in the Family. If a grape is just left on the vine—never picked, never used for anything—it eventually shrivels up and dies. It's good for nothing. But if that grape instead receives the nourishment from the vine and drinks in the sunlight, when it is picked, though it has to go through the crushing and fermentation process, it eventually becomes part of a delicious wine.

68. Don't die on the vine because you're afraid of a little crushing and the remaking process. If you want to truly experience life

for the Lord, then you need to be willing to let go of the comforts of your life, the things that make you feel cozy and satisfied! Branch out and become the man or woman that the Lord is calling you to be!

69. You young people owe it to the Lord, the Family, and Mama and Peter to fulfill your destiny and take your place in the ranks—not just as mere followers, but as leaders too. You need to ask yourself, “Have I settled down and gotten too comfortable with my life? Are there things I am holding back from the Lord, areas of my life which I've chosen the easier route in, but which the Lord wants to challenge me in? Have I become dull to the different challenges set before me? Have I chosen a simpler, easier path, over the path of the Lord's highest will for me that will stretch me and give me the initiative to become not just any old disciple but the best disciple I can possibly be?”

70. Each one of you is responsible to keep the fires of your generation alive and to help move the Family forward. If you lack the initiative and vision to move into action, to grow and change, to fulfill the calling and to play the role the Lord is expecting of you, then you'll never feel that challenge and thrill of the spirit. You'll slowly die on the vine. Having no vision, you'll perish, and you'll fail the Lord as well.

71. Will you do your best for Jesus? Will you be willing to branch out and try something new, something that stretches your faith, draws you closer to the Lord, and forces you to take on the responsibility of leadership? Or will you wait a little while, getting more comfy, and eventually slipping away into the sleepy haze of Lethargy? The choice is yours! Which will you you choose? Have you done your best for Jesus?

In summary:

72. (Mama:) The Lord needs and desires for you of the second generation to take more initiative in your Homes and areas. You are an integral part of the Family and our Revolution

for Jesus, and you can't just continue to rely on the FGAs to carry the bulk of the responsibilities, and think up and pray down all the new ideas and initiatives. You each have an important role to play for Jesus in the Family, so if you haven't found a place of service where you're fulfilled and used of the Lord and able to take initiative, it would be a good idea to ask Him what steps He wants you to take and where He wants you to be.

73. Don't get settled in your comfy and cushy situation—if that describes your life right now—but start taking some steps of faith to leave your comfortable nest! If you've been living with your parents all these years, you might want to consider a change. If you've been in a home field or Western country your whole life, you might want to consider going to a foreign mission field. Join the Family in spirit—if you haven't already—and do your part to start making a difference! You have a lot of power, drive, inspiration, talents, and ideas that will really benefit the Family, if you come out of the shadows and give the Lord a chance to use you fully.

Key promise:

74. All of the faith and gifts of the spirit you need in order to take on new challenges and responsibilities are found in the keys, which give you access to My full power and anointing.

Dig deeper:

- "Die Daily," ML #182:1–9, DB 5
- "Old Bottles," ML #242:1–11, 15–17, DB 5
- "What Have You Done with Your Life?" ML #1330, DB 1
- "The Action Series, Part 3," ML #3308:7–13, GN 908
- "Coming Persecution?" ML #3361:86–102, 161–197, GN 957
- "To Our Teens—Do Your Best," Sara #66, DB 3
- FJWL 1: #38, 55, 233
- FJWL 2: #230

Challenging Thot:

75. (Jesus:) Who wants to live a life only half realized? Why would you want to only live up to a small fraction of your potential? Don't let the life-sucker of laziness get you! Branch out! Saw off the limb and watch Me do miracles for you as you live your life to the full for Me. Only then will you know what it's like to truly live the life of a revolutionary. If you're hiding in someone's shadow, you're going to be sickly pale. Don't let the shadows wash you out! Come on out into the sunshine, look healthy, and have some fun doing it!

In Denial of Persecution

The issue:

76. (Mama:) The Lord has said a great deal about persecution in recent years. He's warned us that persecution is on the horizon, but that exactly when it comes will depend on many things—such as our choices, our prayers, and our obedience to His Words of instruction. However, it's easy to fall into the attitude of "everything continues as it was." Even though the Lord has spoken at length about coming persecution, some of you are tempted to think it's just a lot of "hype" and it's not really going to happen, because there are no real "signs" or "proof." Some of you are living in a state of denial about persecution, and as a result, you're not preparing spiritually and physically for it.

God's mind on the matter:

77. (Jesus:) When a storm gathers out at sea, it is a slow gathering. It isn't an instant creation; it takes time for the low-pressure areas to form, for the moisture to collect, and for the winds to pick up. While that storm is gathering at sea, those on the coast may not even know it's gathering; they may not see any signs. It could be a sunny day, there are beautiful beaches,

and everyone could be sunbathing without the slightest clue of what is about to hit them.

78. That's the way it is with persecution.

A lot goes on behind the scenes in the secret councils of your enemies before anything even happens on the surface. They gather together, they e-mail each other, they wear down officials, they put together dossiers on you, they gather information, they work together to bring about the storm that I have promised is coming.

79. I'm like a radar satellite. I'm up here in the sky, and I can see the clouds gathering.

I can tell you that the moisture is coming together and that the winds are starting to pick up. But you on the beach may not see it coming. To you everything may be calm and peaceful, and it takes faith to believe it when you hear on the radio that the storm is on its way.

80. I'll give you warnings. I'll announce that there's a storm, that the hurricane is coming in, that there is a typhoon gathering, which will make landfall soon. But if you don't listen, if you scoff at the radio broadcast, you're not going to be prepared and have your house shored up with sandbags and your windows boarded. You're going to be lazily relaxing on the beach, when suddenly you'll wake up at the howl of the wind only to realize too late that a tidal wave is heading toward you.

81. It's kind of like a tsunami. The waters gather and begin to pick up speed, and only I—your All-Seeing Eye-in-the-Sky—can see the approaching tidal wave. When you see it coming, it'll be too late to prepare. How often can you see a tsunami gathering? How often do you know when it's going to strike? It strikes without warning. It just comes upon you. You may see the water retreating, but by the time you see those signs it's too late; the terror is upon you already.

82. Persecution does not have to terrify you, if you've prepared. If I've told you that it's coming, and you've listened, and you've secured your safety lines, you can weather even

the most violent of tidal waves without drowning. You can get your planes off the ground and you can be in the air, safe from the destruction below.

83. It's only those who don't prepare who are battered hard by persecution. Those who've heeded My warnings and gotten their flocks to higher grounds of preparedness don't worry so much about the storm. It's those who are weak, those who scoffed, those who didn't heed the weather reports that I sent their way that feel the full force of the crashing destruction of the tidal wave.

84. Those who prepared will rise above and will be unscathed. They'll enjoy the ride; they'll actually come out better for it. Those who didn't listen will unfortunately have to face a much harder ride. They'll have to really swim with all they're worth to stay afloat; they'll have to attack the wave with more ferocity and fight much harder to survive.

85. The ones who listened will almost be amused as it comes. You'll be expecting it, and you'll be ready for it. You can throw your head back and laugh as you ride the wave of persecution. To you, it'll be nothing more than a thrilling ride, because you knew it was coming and you didn't let it catch you unprepared. You were ready to ride the wave, so to you it's a really good time. It's something you can actually enjoy, because you'll know that I'm in control, that I've prepared you. Your faith is strong, and you'll be like those who ride the most massive waves of the sea. You won't be worried or fearful; you'll be overwhelmed by the enjoyment and rush of the moment. You'll be rising above the waves of controversy, riding high above the Wicked One's attempts to crush you. You'll rise above, and have full faith to do so because you were prepared.

86. Those of you who aren't prepared, I have to say I'm sorry for you. I pity you for your unbelief. I know how hard it's going to hit you. I know you won't be ready, so I pray

for you. I pray that your faith will not fail, but I know it's going to be a hard ride and you'll have to really fight to survive.

87. I wish you'd listen. But I know that no matter how many warnings I give you, some of you won't. So I have the coast guard standing by, the divers who will rescue you, but I know it's going to be hard on you, and some of you may not make it. Your faith may be too shaken to withstand the torrent. But what can I do? I've tried. I gave you all you needed to survive. I gave you all you needed to surf the wave, but you didn't listen. I've done My part; the rest is up to you. What more can I do for you?

88. You have to make the decision. You have to decide to prepare. I can tell you it's coming. I can provide you with the needed equipment. I can tell you how to survive. But if you don't listen, what more can I do? Do you want Me to force you? I can't do that. You have to decide of your own accord to prepare. And some of you are sadly going to get hit very hard because you don't listen.

89. I've done My part. I wash My hands, because I know I've done all I can. I'll be there for you. I'll help you as much as I can. But it's your choice: If you want to scoff and criticize the warnings, if you turn off your radio and stop listening to the weather reports, that's your funeral. I've done what I could, the rest is up to you.

90. Will you ride the wave or be crushed by it? You have to decide. You have to prepare. I can't do that for you. You have to be the ones to choose your fate. I can't do that for you, as much as I'd like to. You have to exercise your freedom of choice to obey. If you don't, you're going to suffer casualties and take some pretty hard hits in the days to come. I wish it didn't have to be this way, but if you won't listen, what can I do?

91. Those who have listened, those who will obey will rise above. They'll be wearing

the life preservers I've given them. They'll be above the storm in the planes I've given them. They'll be deep beneath the ocean's fury in the submersibles I've provided. Where are you going to be? Are you still going to be lounging on your beach chairs and be swept away in the gathering storm? Only you can decide what you're going to do. I can't do that for you, and for some of you it's going to be more than you can take because you were not prepared. Such is the way of My will and My judgments on those who don't heed My voice. Where are you going to be? You alone can decide.

In summary:

92. (Mama:) Persecution will come, because our Husband has said it will. The question is whether we will be prepared or not. Being prepared is simply choosing to believe the Lord's predictions and taking the proactive steps He instructs us to take today, both physically and spiritually! We don't have to fear persecution, because if we are prepared in spirit and obedient, we will have what it takes to weather the storm.

Key promise:

93. If you're in My perfect will today, being obedient to Me today, and preparing spiritually and physically today, when persecution hits you will be in the calm at the center of the storm; nothing will harm you, and the keys of protection will surround you on every side and be your strong defense.

Dig deeper:

- "The Knock On The Door Dream," ML #1067:87, 112, 116, 140–141, 150, 177; Vol.9
- "Contingency Plans," ML #1104:1–10, 15–19, 25–28, DB 7
- "With Persecutions," ML #1967:1–22, 32–34, 55–64, DB 8
- "Fear Thou Not, For I Am With Thee," ML #2591:31–54, DB 10

- "Persecution—As God Sees It," ML #2828, DB 11
- "Pray, Obey and Prepare," ML #3420:25–37, 58–79, 90–95, GN 1007
- "Persecution," 1, 3, Word Basics

Challenging That:

94. (Jesus:) Get ready! Be "the few, the prepared, the obedient!" It takes guts to obey, it takes courage to buck the tide, but it'll be worth it when the flood comes and the scoffers are washed away.

95. Do you think Noah felt ashamed when he and his household were lifted off the ground by the rising tides of the flood? Or do you think he heaved a huge sigh of relief that he had obeyed Me and followed through on what I said to do to be prepared? Are you going to be gasping for air or sighing in relief? You choose!

A Pearl of Great Price!

The issue:

96. (Mama:) Within the Family, we continue to have a problem with a lack of love one toward another, and we're especially lacking the free flow of appreciation and encouragement. An attitude some folks have is that people don't really need appreciation and encouragement as much as the Lord says they do; it's a nice thing, but it's not as important as it's supposed to be. There are many reasons we don't appreciate and encourage others as much as we should—laziness, pride, bad habits, feeling inadequate when it comes to expressing ourselves, etc.

97. Another common attitude is when we feel that maybe there are some people who need encouragement and appreciation, but that there are definitely others who don't—perhaps those who seem to have things more together in the natural, or come off as being proud already, or those you think have

so much going for them that they couldn't possibly need encouragement—and this holds you back. Or maybe you need encouragement and appreciation, but you're not getting it, so you wonder why you should go out of your way to give it to others. Then on the other side of the coin, maybe you feel like you don't need appreciation, so why should you go to all the trouble to give it to others who should be able to "survive" without it, too?

God's mind on the matter:

98. (Jesus:) It's very sad to Me that after all I've said on the subject of appreciation, not to mention how much of a proponent of encouragement and appreciation your Father David was, there are still some people who hold staunchly to the attitude that maybe some people need appreciation and encouragement, but others don't.

99. Well, as God of the Universe, Who just so happened to create mankind and just so happened to create you, I've got news for you: Everyone needs appreciation, and there are absolutely no exceptions! The need to be and feel appreciated was included in My "blueprint" when creating the human form and spirit. It's part of the basic human design and fabric, and something I put within the heart and spirit of each and every human being.

100. So I'm sorry, I win here. There's no arguing this point. On this particular issue, there's no room for personal opinion. As Master Creator and Designer, I hold the blueprints, and no matter how much you think or feel that some people don't need appreciation as much as others—and maybe you even feel you don't personally need it—well, simply put, you're wrong.

101. Somehow the Enemy has managed to get a foothold in this particular area in the minds of some of you. In some cases it's a "passive rebellion" and just wanting to do and think differently—the exact opposite from

what you've read and been taught and raised to believe in the Family. But on this particular issue—"thumbing your nose" at the basic inborn human need for appreciation—this is nothing more than saying you know better than Me, or that somehow you or others don't need appreciation. And you know what that is? It's pride, pure and simple.

102. Some people consider those who say or feel they don't need appreciation and encouragement as strong, because they can "stand on their own two feet" without that sort of fluff. That sort of thinking ministers to yourself and your pride. It ministers to your self-assurance, to your independence, to not needing others, to leaning on the arm of the flesh, and to selfishness. Do you see where I'm leading? Do you see now what's really underneath this attitude?

103. You have somehow equated the need for appreciation and encouragement with weakness or a human flaw. Maybe you feel you're "stronger," that you don't need to be bolstered and propped up by words of appreciation and encouragement. And you support your stance by adopting the mentality that, "Appreciation and encouragement is just for the weaklings, those who are insecure, or who battle with negativity. They need appreciation and encouragement to help them along and bolster their faith, self-esteem, and feelings of personal worth, and blah, blah." Well, I'm sorry, but holding to this attitude is nothing less than pride. It's the opposite of true spiritual strength. True spiritual strength is found in humility, in confessing your needs, in needing others, in showing yourself weak and in need of others' support and encouragement.

104. And here's some more news for you: Even those who seem to have things more together in the natural, or come across to you as being quite self-confident and self-assured—and they might even seem a little proud to you—even they need encouragement and

appreciation. So those who hold to the theory that appreciation and encouragement aren't necessary for those sorts of people are simply mistaken.

105. You have to watch out for judging by outward appearances—which includes judging a person by how they look, act, dress, interact with others, or even by how they carry or present themselves to others. Some people do "appear" to carry themselves more confidently and self-assuredly than others, and some people can interpret that as pride. But more often than not, if you take the time to look deeper, you'll find that their "appearance" is no different than someone wearing a yellow, flamboyant shirt versus someone wearing a simpler, plain-colored shirt. It's just the outer shell, the outward appearance, and only by taking the time to look a little deeper do you find that the guy wearing the yellow attention-getting shirt is just as in need of encouragement and appreciation as the next person, sometimes more so.

106. Take it from Me, even those who you think look like they really have it together and couldn't possibly need appreciation or encouragement, need it just as much as anyone else. In fact, sometimes their appearance or manner can be their "cross," because others get so caught up in their appearance or manner that they judge surface judgment, and they judge according to man—they judge in a shallow manner.

107. So you can't judge, and you're in no position to judge. Your job is just to believe Me when I tell you that appreciation and encouragement is a fundamental human need—one which I, your Creator, put there for a very good reason. It's not a deficiency, it's not a flaw, it's not a weakness; in fact, it's the exact opposite. It's a strength.

108. This need is My "pearl of great price" hidden deep down in everyone's soul in order to keep them attached to and dependent on others, and to keep them needy and dependent on Me. It's

what keeps you soft and vulnerable and humble. It's what strengthens your soul—versus pride, which erodes and corrupts your soul. And it's your job and commission as one of My lovers and disciples to supply that human need—to the best of your ability—to others.

109. A little P.S.: I'm not talking about flattery here. That's another issue that somehow seems to have gotten mixed in to the equation. Some people seem to equate people who give compliments and verbal appreciation and encouragement with flatterers. Of course, flattery has been around a long time. It's very prevalent in the world today, where giving insincere compliments is par for the course in order to get something you want. Flattery is fueled by ulterior motives.

110. But to think and adopt the attitude that Family members—your brothers or sisters who love Me and have given their lives to Me and sacrificed everything to do so—would be more prone to flattery than to sincere praise is very, very sad. To Me, that's another sad cop-out, an excuse for not being humble enough to accept people's words of encouragement and appreciation—or worse yet, looking down on others who give compliments, appreciation, and encouragement to others.

111. So that's the other side of the coin: If you think that people who pay you a compliment—and perhaps you hear or see them pay a lot of people compliments—are nothing more than flatterers, then you should check your heart. You need to find out why you feel that way, and why you feel these people are insincere or currying favor. Because that sort of attitude on your part is not rooted in love either.

In summary:

112. (Mama:) Everyone needs appreciation and encouragement! It's a fact of life. Just like plants need sun and water to grow, so do humans need to be appreciated. Appreciation is not just a nice thing, it's not just “fluff” you

can do without, nor is it just a luxury. And the need for it is not just a “human weakness” or “personality flaw.” It's a God-created need, and we all have it! It's a strength to be dependent and in need of others in this way. It's the job of all of us to be humble enough to receive and accept appreciation and encouragement when we get it, and to be humble enough to give it away freely to others, without being judgmental or gauging other people's need for appreciation by outward appearances.

113. Giving appreciation and encouragement is something we all need to improve in. I'm growing in this area as well. In fact, just the other day I made the decision to take the time to appreciate others more. I do often think nice things about those in my Home, or certain things happen throughout the day that remind me of something that I'd like to appreciate a certain person for—such as when someone cooks a delicious meal, or when someone goes the extra mile in their work, or even when someone puts extra effort into their appearance and it shows.

114. I'd often mention something to Peter, like, “Did you notice how pretty so-and-so looked?” or “Isn't it inspiring how so-and-so is changing and growing?” But I'd often forget to tell the individuals how I appreciated them. There were many reasons why this was so, such as getting caught up in business or work, letting it slip my mind, thinking that saying it later wouldn't be as meaningful to the person, etc. In my situation, because I need to concentrate and focus on the Family as a whole, I'm not as involved in my Home and don't have a lot of daily interaction with people, so it takes more effort on my part to call someone or write them a note of appreciation. But I made the commitment to go out of my way to appreciate others more, no matter how long it takes to get around to telling the person.

115. If you're wondering where to begin, why don't you ask the Lord how you can ap-

preciate others more and be a better conduit of His encouragement to others? I'm sure He has ideas for you, and specific ways He wants you to improve, which He'll reveal to you if you take the time to ask Him!

Key promise:

116. You will be a pure and unhindered channel of appreciation and encouragement to everyone you come into contact with if you depend on the keys of humility to be the loving, spirit-filled vessel I have created you to be.

Dig deeper:

- "Little People," ML #974, DB 1
- "Appreciation," ML #997:1-9, 17, 21, Vol.8
- "I Love You—Just You," ML #2985:74-82, Lifelines 22
- "A New Day of Love," ML #3011:2-12, 51-54, Lifelines 22
- "Show Appreciation," ML #3254, GN 859
- "Death to Depression," ML #3464:265-269, Post-it GN #11
- FJWL 2: #328
- "Appreciation," Word Topics
- "Encouragement," Word Topics

Challenging That:

117. (Jesus:) Every flower needs water. Every flower needs the light. Don't deprive your fellow garden dwellers of your reflective power. You can reflect some of My light their way, cheer their day, and help them grow. Then they'll in turn reflect My light back to you.

118. My flower garden isn't just growing on its own; all the flowers are helping each other grow by reflecting My light and warmth toward each other. It's a team effort! Don't let those around you suffer deprivation because you didn't reflect My light their way. Be a reflective flower for Me, and watch the garden grow healthily and strong together.

True Beauty!

The issue:

119. (Mama:) So many Family members today want to look more and more like the System in their personal appearance. There are varying degrees or manifestations of it—girls cutting their hair short, people dyeing their hair to hide the gray, people getting braces just for cosmetic reasons, or even going further with extreme dieting, expensive skin treatments, wanting to get some part of their body "fixed" cosmetically—or wishing they could if they could somehow provision it or afford it.

120. You know, very few people are really ugly. Everyone—at least everyone with the Lord's Spirit—has something, or many somethings, beautiful about them. Even if you think you have a defect or a flaw of some sort, well, everyone else does too, or they think they do! So we're all alike in that respect, and the problem arises when we start comparing with others. And, of course, the System today is full of unrealistic and unnatural images of what beauty is.

121. These trends start out with copying the System or what's currently fashionable. Then once some people in the Family do it, then lots of other people do it, and eventually everyone is copying everyone else—whether they're following some System portrayal of beauty or trying to copy others in the Family who are doing it and look cool and fashionable. It's a comparing thing.

122. Now, I understand that some people have had to get braces on their teeth for legitimate reasons, for example. And sometimes the Lord might give you permission to cut your hair short, even just for variety in your life, or maybe it's a good look for you, or has to do with cutting down on the time it takes you to care for it or something. Or He might allow you to dye your hair too, for some good reason, or for

variety. These things aren't wrong or forbidden. But what is wrong is not confirming your decisions with the Lord, and thinking that you have to conform to the System's standard of beauty or some "cool person's" standard of beauty.

God's mind on the matter:

123. (*Dad:*) If all the flowers in the world were one color, or there was only one type of tree, it would get a little blah after a while. Beauty is found in variety—the varying types and textures, hues and shades. I don't understand why people try so hard to all look alike. What's the beauty in that? I look at these models walking down the runway, and while many of them have symmetrical chiseled features, or great skin, and what the world considers "perfect" bodies, most of them look so similar. They're perfect examples of cookie-cutter beauty.

124. I'm all for people taking good care of themselves and their appearance. I think it glorifies the Lord when you dress neatly, are clean, fit, and you make an effort to look good for those who have to live with you every day. I don't believe in just "letting yourself go." By all means, have get-out or stay fit, put on makeup if you need it. I've seen some of you women put on touches of makeup and it wonderfully enhances the features the Lord's given you. If the Lord shows you to—or gives you permission to—change your hairstyle for variety or practicality, go for it. Make the best of what you have, glorifying the Lord in your body and spirit.

125. What really bugs me, though, is when people try to change the way the Lord made them, when they try to fit someone else's perception of beauty. When you try to fit into someone else's definition of beauty—whether it's a friend, spouse, someone you look up to physically, or the worldly media of magazines, movies, celebrities, etc.—you're giving someone else control over you, over how you think, over your happiness. Who decides that one thing is

better than another—hair that's dark or light, curly or straight, bodies that are muscular or lean, breasts that are large or small, lips that are thin or full, and the list goes on? Why would you give someone else control over perception like that?

126. When you try so hard to fit a certain mold of beauty, whether it suits you or not or is realistic or not, you're giving up your uniqueness. What's the attraction of looking like everybody else? You've seen people who, the first thing you notice is their hairstyle, or their clothing, or their new nips and tucks or enhancements. You notice the superficial beauty, the trend. In some cases, the trend isn't even beautiful; it isn't flattering. It doesn't even match the person's structure or anatomy.

127. One of the many problems associated with comparing or trying to fit into the standard of beauty is that you're never going to be truly happy. You might feel a sense of satisfaction that you changed something you didn't like, or you "made it" to the going trend. But even if you do manage to achieve the level of beauty that you were hoping for, even if you finally become the most sought-after person in your Home or area, how long do you think it's going to last? You'll eventually run into somebody who's higher up on the "physical beauty" ladder. What will you do then?

128. What's your motive? Is it happiness? If that's what you're looking for, you're not going to find it like that. The constant need to be beautiful or to meet the world's standard of beauty leads to obsession—first the physical makeover, then the molding of your personality to fit the new you, then the struggle to keep the look or to keep up with the changing looks as each trend gives way to a new one. What kind of life is that? Do you think you'll ever fit the perfect image of the world's idea of beauty? Not even worldly celebrities can reach it, and they have plenty of cash to change anything they want. And change they do, because the

trends in what's beautiful keep changing, and even the richest can barely keep up.

129. Human nature is to want to be well thought of, to be attractive. But if you're looking to the world's standards, then you're going about it in the wrong way. You need to have a balance—and not only a balance, but you need to go about it in the right way, the Lord's way. True beauty is not only about the physical appearance, it's also about your inner beauty, that “spark” that sets you apart from the millions of others who are dressing the same way, getting the same haircut, trying to achieve the same body, the “interchangeable” masses, deserting their originality in an attempt to keep up with the trend.

130. Honestly, most guys don't even enjoy the standards set by the media and the current trends. Most guys prefer a woman who has spark, who has a personality. Women of the world might be pretty or might be able to fix things about themselves that aren't “perfect,” but it comes at the cost of happiness. They lose contentment. Once they change one thing, they have to change more. Trying to fit a changing standard will leave you unsatisfied. One day you'll realize that you spent years trying to be beautiful, years that were wasted because you were chasing after superficial beauty, when you could have been enhancing the things that make you truly beautiful, the things that make you stand out, that make people want you.

131. Save yourself time, and clear your mind of everyone else's perception of what is perfect. Set aside all the things you've been told or seen or thought were beautiful. Ask the Lord what specific qualities He gave you that make you unique. Ask Him how you can enhance those qualities or features—physical and spiritual.

Additional reading:

132. (Jesus:) The key in being able to accept that it's not always the right thing to try to be so “fashionable” or “in style” is

to measure your styles, attitudes, and actions according to what is best for the work. It really depends on what country you're in, your age, gender, etc.

133. Trying to look “cool” according to the latest Western fashions is really only going to be a drag and a hindrance to your missionary work for Me—especially for young people, because the styles are often not “nice” looking, either make you appear too sexy or too scruffy according to local standards, or promote Americanism and Western values, as opposed to promoting Me and My Words.

134. As My disciples, I've called you to be “in the world, but not of the world,” and letting yourself become fashion-conscious to the point where it hinders your sample and witness, and encourages your brothers and sisters to do the same, is just not discipleship behavior. If you really care about Me and My work and spreading the Gospel to as many people as possible, activating the world, and being a 110% disciple more than anything else, you'll come to Me with an open, desperate, and humble heart, and be willing to also be open to suggestions from your shepherds or witnessing partners, about what the best “look” is for you at this time in your life in the situation you are in.

135. You will genuinely want to know how you can best “become one” with the people where you live, and at the same time be a sample of simplicity and humility. You know the verse, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” and that's the vision (John 3:30). You just want to be simple, tidy, and a good sample, so that you can make it as easy as possible for the sheep to see My Spirit. After all, it's not about you—you're just there to be My hands, My feet, and My mouth to carry My message to them. When you let yourself get tangled in the System's web of perverted beauty, all you do is block My Spirit and the flow of My love, and hinder your own effectiveness.

136. It all comes down to what is really more important to you: yourself, or living for Me all the way. I never give you more than you're able to bear, and when you yield this area of your life completely to Me, you may be surprised at how good I can help you look. I'm not trying to make you hideous or make you look bad—I just need clean, clear vessels who can reflect My light in the brightest way possible, so as to bring as many into My Kingdom as you can. That's the point, that's the goal—it's up to you how you apply it, obey it, and live it.



137. (Jesus:) In these messages I'm not implying that a woman cutting her hair is worldly or wrong. I am simply advocating the principle of asking Me everything. I'm also making a point about not conforming to the world and its standards of beauty.

138. Whenever a woman—or anyone, for that matter—does something drastic to their body, which is really My property, the temple of My Spirit, then they owe it to Me to ask for My permission. My children should have a measure of respect for their bodies, and shouldn't haphazardly cut their hair, dye their hair, get a piercing, acquire a tattoo, or do anything else along those lines without first checking with Me.

139. It's not that I'm against all of these things; sometimes I'll actually be in favor of a woman cutting her hair, if she truly looks better with shorter hair and is a better representative and sample in her appearance as a result. But what I'm not in favor of is women doing drastic things to themselves—their bodies, their hair, or whatever—without first checking with Me. It's a matter of principle. Your bodies are not your own; you are bought with a price, and I have instructed you to glorify Me not only in your spirits, but also in your bodies as well.

140. A woman's hair is her crowning glory; it's one of the masterpieces I designed to enhance women's beauty—so, it should

stand to reason that whether long or short, a woman's hair should glorify Me. Everything about a godly woman should glorify Me. That doesn't mean every woman needs to have long hair or that every woman should be the same. But it does mean that every change made, every modification chosen, every part of a woman's body should glorify Me. If I'm not in agreement with something, then it doesn't glorify Me, and I'm not pleased.

141. I'm not going to say long hair is My will and short hair is not. That's not the point and it's not always the case. The point is for My women to glorify Me in everything they do. The point is that My women should ask Me about the changes they wish to make, and not do things on a whim. The point is that I should be involved in every decision.

In summary:

142. (Mama:) There's nothing unique about conforming to the world's, or anyone else's, standards of beauty. Being like everyone else doesn't make you beautiful, or help you stand out from the crowds, or attract others. Comparing with others and working so hard to be something you're not doesn't bring you happiness or contentment or freedom. It squelches your inner beauty, the special "spark" the Lord has given you, and locks you up in a cold, dark cell of "self."

143. By all means, take care of yourself! There's nothing wrong with that; in fact, it's part of "glorifying God in your body." Stay healthy, keep clean, exercise right, put on a bit of makeup if you need to, and do whatever the Lord shows you to do to enhance your physical and spiritual beauty and amplify your God-given originality and uniqueness. But don't work so hard to abide by a standard of beauty that isn't even godly, won't ever make you happy, and certainly won't improve your discipleship.

144. Ask the Lord to cleanse you of your worldly viewpoints and perceptions

of beauty, and ask Him what specific qualities He has blessed you with that make you “stand out from the crowd.” Accept the way He has made you, relax in the knowledge of His perfection, throw off the chains that bind you in worldly trends and mindsets, and let your natural beauty—your physical and spiritual features—shine! That’s true beauty!

Key promise:

145. Let the world wallow in their mire of conformity when it comes to beauty, while you claim the keys of freedom to give you a spiritual makeover and help you to see others—and yourself—as I do. Your old perceptions of beauty will fade as I show you the meaning of true and lasting beauty!

Dig deeper:

- “Revolutionary Women,” ML #250:4–5, DB 5
- “Man Looketh on the Outward Appearance, Part 1,” ML #3124:61–74, Lifelines 24
- “Man Looketh on the Outward Appearance, Part 2,” ML #3125:49–80, Lifelines 24
- “Living the Lord’s Law of Love, Part 9,” ML #3209:113–115, GN 812
- “Mama’s Memos, No.11,” ML #3253:56–63, GN 858
- “Issues, Part 3,” ML #3302:2–11, GN 904
- “Jewels on Comparing,” ML #3326:65–72, GN 932
- “Recognizing and Resisting Pan,” ML #3401:75–76, Post-it GN #3
- FJWL 1: #145, 160
- FJWL 2: #452
- “Beauty,” Word Topics

Challenging That:

146. (Jesus:) You know what I see as beautiful? You! You make this world beautiful! The fact that you’re just how I made you to be makes the world beautiful. Would you rather be someone else? Would you deprive Me of My artistic license on Earth? Would you take away the canvas from the Painter? The chisel from the Sculptor? Or the instrument from

the Musician? Don’t rob Me of My talents by wishing you were something else.

147. Be a searchlight for Me, not just a mirror. A mirror has its uses, but I can’t create light in darkness with a mirror. I need you to be a spotlight of My Spirit to shine into the darkness to set the mirrors free from their bondage of reflecting everyone else’s darkness. Be My shining light of originality and liberty. Don’t reflect the darkness; shine the light!

Intergenerational Dating and Marriage

The issue:

148. (Mama:) Some SGAs have an “off” attitude when it comes to sexual sharing between the generations.—Basically that they don’t want to do it, they don’t approve of it, they criticize others who do it, and they make their feelings known, saying that they think it’s gross, etc.—which can often be rather hurtful. Sometimes they even make such comments when they’re watching videos with intergenerational love scenes. Some SGAs even refuse to have dates with fellow SGAs who share with FGAs.

149. A connected mindset—which some SGAs and FGAs have—is that of looking down on those who marry intergenerationally. Someone recently wrote to me and commented:

I heard about an FGA sister who decided to marry an SGA man. God bless this precious sister! But one thing that bothered me was the comments I heard from some of the FGAs and young people, like, “Oh, how horrible!” Or, “She is old!” Or, “That isn’t good. She will look like his mother.” How sad that there are people who think like that.

God's mind on the matter:

150. (Jesus:) I understand that there are some of you young people who have a difficult time sharing sexually with FGAs. The ideal would be that there was no generation gap at all, and that you young people could feel free to enjoy age-appropriate sexual fellowship with those of the first generation. Yet I realize you are human and it's natural for young people to be attracted to other young people, and so I do not judge or condemn you.

151. But you might want to keep in mind that you're almost certainly missing out on a lot of fun that can come from having sex with FGAs. They are often more likely to be experienced and very natural about sex, and can even help you expand your horizons. In fact, for some of you young people, sharing with an FGA could help free you from the restrictive sexual attitudes that are so often the result of simple immaturity. The choice is yours, but if you decide to ignore the FGAs sexually, be aware that you might be missing out.

152. However, what I'd really like to address here is the attitude some of you have had regarding other young people who happen to find pleasure in the sexual company of the first generation. It's one thing to feel less than attracted to certain people—that's normal. But when your overall attitude is that any young person who has sex with someone from the first generation is doing something "gross" or "weird," that's a pretty good indication that your sexual maturity level is pretty low. This attitude is just plain childish. And, as you know, children are not yet mature enough to be trusted with sex, so maybe you're not either.

153. It's not My will to coerce any of you young people to share sexually with FGAs. In general, it's a good idea, and I greatly commend those of you who have done so, or even those of you who are willing to and are working up the courage. However, there is no commendation for those who look down upon or criticize or

mock intergenerational sex or marriage. If you have this attitude, then I want to make it very clear to you right now that it's absolutely wrong, and what you might do or say to express it can hurt people and be a detriment to the work.

154. Whether or not you engage in intergenerational sex or marriage is up to you. But if you have the wrong attitude, and especially if you're boasting or gossiping about it, please ask for prayer. Pray specifically that I will either help you to develop the right, mature attitude, or at least until that happens, that I will help you keep quiet for the sake of the love and unity that is so vital and fundamental to Family life and communal living.

Additional reading:

155. (Jesus:) The attitude that many young people in the Family have toward intergenerational sex is simply a worldly mindset. It's crept in mainly through the avenue of movies.

156. It's not that I expect every young person to enjoy having sex with everyone. That never has been and never will be the case. Nobody likes having sex with everyone. There are people you click with and people you don't click with, and if you're open-minded enough about the whole thing, you'll find out that it really doesn't have to do with age. Young people who step out in this regard often find that there are some FGAs that they much prefer to have sex with than some of their peers. There's so much more to enjoyment in sex than age.

157. You'll find that often those who are adamant that they don't have sex with FGAs, because it's something they will "never do," are often those who are very choosy about their sex partners in general. Often those who have a hard time dating FGAs because they're "old" or it would be "gross" for them are the kind of people who are in the habit of judging others by their outward appearance, instead of looking at their heart, their personality, and

everything else about others that makes them special.

158. Some young people just need to get off their high horses and stop being so judgmental and critical. Often these same young people who will “never have dates with FGAs” are very choosy even about their SGA sex partners. They’re often not very sacrificial with their peers. So they often simply have a rigid standard of what they do and do not like, the people they will and will not have sex with, and they’re not open to Me moving in their life; they’re not willing to step out by faith.

159. I’m sorry if some young people have a hard time with Me saying that having sex with FGAs might expand their horizons, but it’s the truth. Those who are so closed, who will never have sex with anyone outside of their generation or with anyone who doesn’t fit within the confines of their strict sexual preferences category, who put limits on their yieldedness to Me, those are the kind of people who need their horizons expanded. If they would just learn to be a little more humble, a little more loving, a little more sacrificial, a little more open, a little more yielded, it might change their life.

160. It’s not that the issue of young people having sex with FGAs is so important in itself. It’s the issue of closing yourself off to new things that’s dangerous. It’s deciding you’re never going to do something that causes you to stagnate spiritually. It’s deciding you’re not going to yield to My will, or reach out to someone in need, regardless of their generation, that tears down unity. It’s being so stuck in your own ways and your own attitudes and your own personal preferences that gets in the way of the flow of the freedom of My Spirit.

161. I’m not going to force anyone to have intergenerational sex; that’s not the point. It’s completely a matter of personal faith, a personal decision between each person and Me. But I will say that if you’re living by your own rules in any area of your life, including this

one, it’s not going to bear fruit, and you won’t be as blessed as you would otherwise be.



162. (Jesus:) What makes you think that I am going to be able to bless Homes, or individuals, where disunity exists between the generations? My Spirit of love lands only where it is wanted, only in the hearts of those who are desirous of My Spirit of love, and who take active steps to counter the Enemy’s lies and inroads through division between the generations.

163. Who is willing to step out and show My love to another, whether FGA or SGA? Who is willing to hear from Me and put what I show them into practice? Who is willing to take tangible steps of progress and put love into action, even if it means discarding a wrong attitude about sharing with those of the opposite generation, and stepping out to do so? Are you willing to believe My Words and step out into an arena like this if I should ask it of you? Have you asked Me lately about My views on your personal attitudes regarding sharing with those of the opposite generation? Are you willing to?

164. Many, many in the Family have a wrong mindset on this subject. Despite the Word that I have given, many have chosen rather to hold on to their own attitudes and are not willing to give Me free rein in their life in this area. They prefer to refuse to believe My Words and not put My love into action in whatever area of their life I choose to lead them. They prefer not to be convicted by My Word and moved into action.—The first action being asking Me in what ways they can apply it in their lives, and the second action being putting it into practice.

165. So, so many have suffered because of this. So many have suffered because there were no others around them willing to be a vessel of My love. Many have suffered because even those who would have been willing have

been held back from full obedience because of the attitudes of others, because they would be looked down upon. My love has been bottled up, stifled, and rejected because of bad attitudes and worldly viewpoints.

166. Those who have reached out with My love to share with someone of the other generation, in so many cases have been looked down on, ostracized, gossiped about, or put down by others of their generation. How sad this makes Me. How angry it makes Me that the love that I would pour forth through someone is squelched by others' bad attitudes that are so contrary to My Word and My love.

167. With what pride and admiration I look upon those who have continued to love and obey My Words to them and the conviction that I place upon their hearts, regardless of what others say or do. The rewards that are laid up for them are innumerable. The joys that they will experience and the blessings that I will bestow upon them are beyond imagining.

168. What will you personally choose? Will you be as the stars that shine with My praise and love because of your obedience and sacrifice? Or will you endure shame and contempt later when you realize how often you chose your own way and your own mindsets above My Word, or because making a step was too hard, or because you just couldn't face the fact that your attitude was contrary to My Word? The choice is yours. I hope you choose wisely.

In summary:

169. (Mama:) It's your choice whether or not you engage in intergenerational sex. No one is forcing you—not Peter and me, and not the Lord. Intergenerational marriage or relationships are also according to your faith and the Lord's will for your life. There will be some times when the Lord will put a special love between two members of different generations, and it will be His will for them to marry

and be together. It's a matter of finding God's will if you're in that situation; and if you're the "onlooker," then it's your responsibility to respect God's will in others' lives, and love and support them in their decision.

170. There's no "right" or "wrong" way in the physical as far as intergenerational dates and relationships go; sometimes it's just personal preference. But there's definitely something wrong if you criticize others for their level of faith, or gossip about people behind their backs, or make hurtful comments when others are obeying the Lord's will in their life. Also, keep in mind that although it is a bit more natural, in general, for most people to be attracted to those closer to their age, there's a lot of fun and fellowship and good times that you might be missing out on if you close yourself off to reaching out to others who aren't your "preferred" company.

Key promise:

171. The power of the keys is strong enough to break you out of the box of your own opinions and ways of doing things, and to enlighten you with the freedom of the spirit that knows no boundaries.

Dig deeper:

- "The Lord's Commission to You," ML #3095:25–36, Lifelines 23
- "Overcoming the Generation Gap," ML #3161:128–131, Lifelines 24
- "Going for the 'Golden Victories'—Together," ML #3169:52–55, Lifelines 24
- "Living the Lord's Law of Love, Part 4," ML #3204:31–50, GN 807
- "Living the Lord's Law of Love, Part 9," ML #3209:101–104, 111–156, GN 812
- FJWL 1: #414

Challenging That:

172. (Dad:) There is neither old nor young in Christ Jesus! We're a team, all members of

the same body, working together to overcome the world's generational dogma. Lord help us not to get settled down and tied down by the chains of conformity to the ways of the world! Jesus, set us free to live for You as only You know how to live! Free us from generational prejudice and the injustice of the generation gap. We're all one in Christ Jesus!

Communication Check

The issue:

173. (Mama:) This issue doesn't fall so directly into the "bad attitude" category; I'd put it more in the "bad habits" department. And although it may seem like a little issue, it's an important one. The issue is bad speech and writing habits and repetition in prayer. This is a problem that I addressed in "When Ye Pray, Use Not Vain Repetitions," but it seems like we all can stand to improve in this area of our lives—whether we need help with our public speaking, with our writing skills, or to be clearer and less repetitive in our prayers and praises.

God's mind on the matter:

174. (Jesus:) Communication through the spoken word is an important skill that every on-fire, praising, and prayerful Christian should strive to improve. It's essential to be able to clearly and effectively express yourself, whether you're witnessing, praying, praising Me, or communicating with your brothers and sisters.

175. I know that some of you struggle with speech for various reasons, and some do not. Some are inherently bold and outgoing or have a naturally clear voice or the gift of gab. Whereas others are shier, have a naturally quiet voice, or aren't as eloquent or vocally expressive. I have given you each a different set of strengths and weaknesses, and I do not require that all My children suddenly become

skilled orators with the verbal talents of a talk show host. But that doesn't mean you should ignore your speech habits, because they are an important part of life as an active Christian.

176. There are all kinds of ways to improve your speech. For some people it's more obvious where improvement is needed, such as for those who speak too quietly or slur their words, or those who speak too quickly and need to slow down. But for most of you the problems are not as apparent. For example, some of My children will, with a very clear, loud voice, use a lot of "uh" or "umm" fillers. Others communicate fine with people, but tend to be too monotonous when praying or use vain "Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Lord!" repetitions. These poor speech habits are not edifying to the body, and striving to overcome them is a sign of love for those around you.

177. I want to make it very clear that I love each of you just the way you are. No matter how you speak or what you say, I have a clear, deep understanding of your heart. When praying or praising you could technically just quote your ABCs and I'd be able to put it all together. As long as you can communicate reasonably, then there are definitely more important things in life to worry about than your speech habits. But if you can take the time to improve your verbal communications, you'll find a lot of blessings attached. For example:

1) You'll find that people are more apt to enjoy being around you and conversing with you. This brings about the blessing of fellowship.

2) A clearly spoken message is a good sample to lost sheep. An effective speaker is an effective witness, and that brings all the blessings that come with effective personal witnessing. (Of course, that's not to say that if you aren't eloquent, or don't think you're "an effective speaker," that I can't use you to be a good witness. There have been numerous accounts throughout history of simple, unlearned and ignorant men and women [and even an ass,

ha!] being used as powerful witnesses—despite their speech handicaps. But if you can improve your speech in order to improve your witness, it's well worth the effort—because then I will be able to use you that much more.)

3) You're more likely to feel inspired and uplifted if you can more clearly convey your prayer and praises in public. This brings the blessing of fulfillment and also enhances unity.

4) Breaking out of the mold of vain repetition forces you to come up with new and more specific expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. Specific prayers bring specific results, and that's a blessing in itself.

178. Changing your speech habits can sometimes be a difficult task, and the older you get the more difficult it will be to break bad habits. But there's never an age where it can't be done, even if it means a little hard work. So whether you're 15 or 50 you might as well take some time to evaluate your speech. Maybe you already know of some ways you can improve, and you can just start with one improvement at a time. For example, you may already realize you say "Lord" after every sentence of your prayer, so this is a good place to start and make a conscious effort to overcome. Once that's taken care of, then move on to the next thing.

179. If you're having a hard time discovering what your speech habits are, here are a few tips:

1) Try praying, praising, or just talking naturally into a tape recorder. Then listen to your voice. You may find that there are several ways to improve.

2) Ask your friends or spouse/significant other and see if they notice any particularly poor speech habits.

3) Ask Me to give you a prophecy about your speech habits and what steps need to be taken to improve them.

180. As a reminder, here are some of the most common pitfalls facing many of My children in the Family:

1) Too many "fillers" in speech, such as "uh," "like," "really," "well," "you know," and "I mean."

2) Vain repetition and excessive fillers when praying, such as saying "Jesus" or "Lord Jesus" or clearing your throat after virtually every sentence.

3) Exaggerating or overemphasizing aspects of your prayers or other conversations by overuse of the words "really," "desperately," "amazing," "wonderful," and similar adjectives.

4) Speaking too quietly to an individual without looking into their eyes or projecting. Children and teenagers can be especially prone to this problem, and as parents and teachers it's important to lovingly teach your children to project.

5) Overuse, and in some cases misuse, of large words. It's a good idea to try to expand your vocabulary, but be sure you understand what a word means before you use it.

181. On a similar topic, I'd like to address written communication. For most people, writing is not quite as important as speech. If you're a secretary or writer it's imperative that you develop proper writing skills, but for the vast majority of My children it is more important to concentrate on acquiring a decent level of verbal skill. Nevertheless, many of you do find yourself sitting at a desk from time to time, either keeping up with your mail ministry, writing reports, or writing witnessing testimonies, etc. So while I'm not expecting you all to become world-class writers, it's still possible to learn a few basic principles that can make a significant difference in the overall clarity and readability of your written work.

182. Here are a few common writing pitfalls, some of which are very similar to the verbal speech tips above:

1) Overuse of large words: Many young people in particular feel it's necessary to write in a heady, wordy manner. This is usually due to the misconception that a lot of big words automatically equal skilled writing. However, unless you're writing a legal statement or contract, heady writing usually comes across as a bit silly and overdone. A truly skilled writer knows how to use large words sparingly to properly or poetically express himself or herself.

2) Misuse of vocabulary: If you're going to use a big word, make sure you know what it means first.

3) Exaggeration: Overuse of superlatives such as "incredible," "greatest," "unbelievable," "really," or excessive exclamation points can cause your written work to seem exaggerated, and can actually dampen the effect of enthusiasm. Before you use an enthusiastic word or expression, stop and think if that was really true. For example, was the provisioning of a meal truly a "really incredible miracle," or was it more of "an inspiring answer to prayer"?

183. These are just a few of the primary pitfalls. The Word contains many tips that are sure to help you improve your writing skills, and the more time you spend writing, the more important it is for you to hone this skill. Put forth the necessary effort to become a more effective Christian and professional missionary, and once I know you're doing what you can, I can definitely help with the rest.

In summary:

184. (Mama:) Communication skills—written and spoken—are well worth honing and improving. It's showing love to others, because everyone around you will benefit if you make progress in this area of your life. It's exhibiting love for the lost, because the Lord will be able to use you as a better, clearer, more powerful witness. It's a part of your testimony to the world as a professional and

well-equipped Christian and missionary. It's an area of your life that you can stretch and grow in, and change that brings you progress is always a good thing. It's also a perfect opportunity for you to use the keys to change your habits and ways of doing things, even if you've been doing them the same way for years. "The spirit is more powerful than the flesh; no matter how long the flesh has been doing something, the keys have power to influence and change things."

Key promise:

185. You can change your bad habits, your old ways of doing things, your personal preferences, and even your likes, if you put your will on My side, ask for the power of the keys to do what you can't do, and take little steps of progress every day. Nothing is too deeply entrenched in your nature for the keys, which go to any lengths to effect change.

Dig deeper:

- "Watch Your Words," ML #2849, DB 11
- "When Ye Pray, Use Not Vain Repetitions," ML #2914, DB 12
- "Loving Interaction," ML #3234:10–28, 38–52, GN 837
- "Practicing Praise," ML #3471:23–24, 71–72, GN 1059

Challenging That:

186. (Dad:) Death and life are in the power of tongue. Are your words fresh, alive, and beautiful? Don't settle for the crummy mediocrity of repetitiveness. Make your words count. Use them to express the beauties of living for the Lord. Let your mouth be a testimony of His love and His ability to break old habits and be freshened and renewed day by day. Don't let those habits bind your tongue. Break free with the liberating vocabulary of Heaven by using your mouth to praise the Lord daily in new, fresh, and alive words.