



TRAINING WINNING TEAMS PART 5

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This GN should be read
unitedly as a Home.

Appreciation and Variety!

By Maria

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Dear Family,

I love you each dearly, and am so happy to be with you again for another “Training Winning Teams” issue. I pray that you have enjoyed the GNs you’ve received thus far, and that you’ve been able to implement the counsel, apply the Word, and make changes in your Home for the better.

2. In this GN we’re going to hear from our Husband and Dad on two very important topics. One is the importance of appreciation in our Homes, and the other is why it’s beneficial, and in fact essential, to have variety in our Homes—variety of personnel, variety of preferences, likes and dislikes, etc. These topics might seem to be smaller than some of the ones we’ve already addressed in this series, but they’re essential to having happy, productive, winning teams.

3. If people feel genuinely appreciated and loved, they’ll be happy, and will be excellent contributors and team players. If your Home has variety—children, singles, parents, young people, older people, and those from various parts of the world, as much as possible—then your Home will be well-balanced, and the contributions each person makes will strengthen the overall Home, add spice, and keep your lives for Jesus interesting, enjoyable, and fruitful.

4. The topic of appreciation is something that’s been on my heart for some time. I’ve been concerned that we, as a Family, don’t appreciate one another as much as we should. Perhaps we’ve gotten out of the habit of it, or we’re proud, or we’ve grown lazy, or we’ve just failed to realize how important it is. Some of us look at it as more of a frill than a need. I’ve been burdened to do something about this,

to have an appreciation revolution. Maybe the messages in this GN will cause that revolution. I pray so.

5. Each of you, dear Family, are unique individuals. I think about all of the things that I can appreciate you for, and it’s overwhelming—there’s so much to commend you for. You sacrifice and give your lives to Jesus each and every day. You’re witnesses. You’re caretakers of children. Many of you are parents and shepherds. You give love to others. You’ve forsaken all to serve Jesus. You daily eschew the things of this world in favor of heavenly riches.

6. You follow and obey the Word. You strive to emulate Jesus and be His lights to the world. You put Jesus first, above your own wants and desires. You work hard to learn how to use the spiritual weapons and become skilled in them. You are doing your part to ensure the Family’s future by getting behind the changes the Lord has implemented. You are making your Home a winning team. You are each strengthening your personal discipleship and relationship with Jesus.

7. There’s so much that I appreciate about you, dear Family! I appreciate your love, your dedication, your faithfulness, your sacrificial spirits, your obedience, your faith to follow where the Lord leads, your willingness to do the humble thing, your eagerness to implement the new moves of the spirit, your fighting spirits, your endurance and patience and stick-to-itiveness, your prayerfulness, your connection with Jesus! There’s so much that I appreciate in you that I could go on and on. And if I could appreciate each of you individually, I’d be able to say a whole lot more.

8. It's my personal desire and prayer to see much more appreciation flowing within the Family. We have more wonderful qualities, attributes, skills and talents to appreciate in one another than most people in the world do, because the Family is made up of so many anointed and gifted individuals—not to mention the many spiritual gifts we are each blessed with. So it shouldn't be difficult for us to start appreciating one another more, since we have so much to appreciate and be thankful for!

9. Would you each make the effort to not only appreciate one another more, but also learn to appreciate the variety we are blessed with in the Family? Our wonderful and exquisite

Family is made up of males and females, young and old, children and adults, singles and couples, and all kinds of nationalities. The Lord has made such variety for a reason—to aid us in being the best teams we can be for Him; so that we can lend our gifts and talents to one another; so that when one is weak, the other will be strong; so that we can complement and enhance our teammates.

10. Thank you, dear Family, for applying the counsel and training in this GN to your lives and Homes. You won't regret it. It's an investment well worth making.

Love in our Creator of variety and the things that make each of you special,

Mama

A P P R E C I A T I O N

The Brief

11. Individual members of winning teams don't just play well on their own, but they help their fellow teammates to be all that they can be. A big part of the way they do this is by appreciating them. Members of winning teams know that the best team players are not those who lift themselves up or promote their own abilities and skills, but those who enhance others by appreciating the roles they play, the jobs they do, and their presence and contributions to the team.

12. When people feel unappreciated, unneeded, or not a part of the "family" of the Home, it's a bucket of cold water on the morale of the team. Winners know this, so they value others, serve others, respect others, have faith in others, esteem others better than themselves, put the needs of others before their own, speak well of others in front of them and behind their back, and do their part to build a "family" spirit within their Home.

Pointers for Winning Teams

Appreciation is a need

13. Everyone needs appreciation. Take note that I said "needs," not just "wants." Appreciation is a human need, not a weakness. Yes, that's right. Appreciation is not just something nice to have when possible. It's something that each person needs in order to be happy and to thrive. No matter what people look like, or how they act or appear, even if they seem like they obviously have their act together and must know it, they still need appreciation. Chances are they're overcompensating and may even have an inferiority complex or battle negativity. You can't judge by outward appearances (1Sam.16:7).

14. It's not up to us, as unknowing and unwise as we are, to decide who needs appreciation and who doesn't. We all need appreciation, even if some of us don't like to admit it. Everyone needs to feel important, like they're a contributor, and know that they're a necessary

part of the Home. You need it, I need it, everyone needs it! And how are we going to feel this way unless we're all regularly telling each other, appreciating each other, and showing and expressing our gratitude for the loads others carry and the burdens they bear?

**Appreciation is like coffee.
It refreshes, inspires, and
spurs you into action.**

Results of lack of appreciation

19. (Mama:) The results of a lack of appreciation are very sad. When someone receives little or no appreciation, all kinds of

15. Appreciation is important for all mankind. But it's even more important for disciples in the Family to be avid appreciators, because the Enemy fights each of us so hard. He is always available to tell us how bad we are, or how unneeded we are, and that we're just a burden or a liability. So we need to unitedly counter the Enemy's lies and attacks on our brothers and sisters through appreciation, so that he isn't able to get his foot in the door and spread his evil seeds of discouragement.

16. (Dad:) I have always been an advocate of appreciation. Everyone likes appreciation. But it's more than that; everyone needs appreciation! Appreciation is to the human heart as sunshine and water are to a flower. Have you ever seen a flower without sunshine and water? It wilts and never grows to its full potential and beauty, and fades away unless it's moved into a place where it can get adequate sunlight and water.

17. Good soil is needed for a plant to grow well. But even good soil isn't enough to make a flower grow—it must have water and sunshine. It's similar with people: Appreciation, encouragement, and faith in each other feeds camaraderie and a sense of belonging that bonds you as a team.

18. You may have a good Home, one where your priorities and goals are in line with the Word and you're striving to make the right decisions as a Home, but appreciation and vocal love and affection for one another enhance all those other efforts. Appreciation is the water and sunshine to the flowers (the individuals) planted in good soil (your Home).

problems can arise. They'll feel unloved for one, which can even lead to them feeling that the Lord doesn't love them. Lack of appreciation often contributes to battles with loneliness, negativity, comparing, discouragement, depression, and other such attacks of the Enemy. It can make some people curl up in their little shell and pull away from the unity of the Home because they don't feel they're a part, they don't feel they're important or wanted or needed or appreciated.

20. When people feel unappreciated, unneeded, or as if they're not a part of the "family" of the Home, they are often more likely to want to move to another Home, in search of a place where they will feel needed and appreciated. This is a typical cause of people moving around from Home to Home; they feel they haven't found their place and are trying to find a Home that they can "belong" to. And a big reason some people don't feel they "belong" is because there is a lack of sufficient appreciation and gratitude expressed to the person for the contributions they make to the Home.

21. Sometimes, in very sad cases, a lack of appreciation has even been the cause of some people leaving the Family, because they became disillusioned and discouraged. Perhaps they felt they had been serving the Lord so faithfully and sacrificially for so long, but with no recognition or appreciation, so they gave up. A lack of appreciation can be a contributor to some people leaving the Lord's service, and that's a real shame. Of course, it's usually not the only reason, but it can be a factor.

22. Dear Family, these things ought not so to be! So Lord help us not to be guilty of failing others through lack of appreciation and outgoing love and concern.

23. (Jesus:) Remember when I spoke through David in the Psalms that “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God” (Psa.92:13)?

Well, each one of your Homes is My house, as well as one of My courts, and each one of My children is planted there, and I wish for each one of My children—young and old—to flourish. That means not just survive or maintain a degree of happiness and a sense of belonging, but actually flourish! When something flourishes, it means it grows strong and healthy—and continues to grow strong and bear fruit—because the conditions are right. For anything to grow and flourish, it needs steady nourishment. And how true it is that genuine love and appreciation are the water and fertilizer whereby a soul grows and flourishes.

24. Each child of David is no different. Everyone needs to feel appreciated. Everyone needs to feel needed. Everyone needs to feel a part of something bigger than themselves and their own little world. Everyone needs to feel that they personally contribute to their Home in a unique way—even if in their own eyes it’s a small way. Unlocking the strengths, talents, and qualities within each member of your Home is an important part of forming a winning team. And hand in hand with that is active (not passive!) recognition of those qualities and strengths, and expressing that appreciation for each one.

25. If appreciation is not present in a Home, then sooner or later people will drift away, because they don’t feel particularly needed, they don’t feel part of the Home, they’ve lost their sense of belonging. Yes, you are all a part of a greater spiritual Family, but bringing that down to earth, unless each one feels a personal and needed part of a “family” unit within the greater Family, then they’ll go searching elsewhere.

Appreciation benefits the whole Home

26. (Mama:) When there’s lots of appreciation flowing between Home members, then this significantly boosts that Home into being a winning team. Appreciation has the power to aid disciples to do their best for the Lord. It makes one want to do more, stretch more, contribute more, feel like they’re capable of more, and be content to fill the role they play. If everyone in the Home is appreciating one another, respecting one another, enhancing one another’s strengths and gifts, and showing faith in one another, this multiplies the overall productivity and happiness of the Home unit.

27. So it’s definitely to your advantage to take the time to appreciate those you live with. It will make you happier, because you’ll have the peace of knowing that you’re being obedient and being a vessel of the

Lord’s love. It will make the recipient of the appreciation happier, because it always brightens another’s life. And if everyone’s appreciating everyone, then the entire Home will be happier, more content, and more at peace. And when people are happy they work harder, they’re easier to live with, they’re better witnesses, they’re bigger contributors. Appreciation brings so many benefits.

28. (Dad:) Think of optimism versus pessimism for a moment. The optimist can find great joy in even the smallest happenings, when he chooses to see the positive. He’s looking at the good—even in seemingly bad situations—and because of that, he sees the good. And subsequently his life is filled with goodness.

29. If you put a pessimist in the same setting, you’ll have the opposite results. Why? Because instead of searching for the good, he has highlighted and focused on the bad—the seeming misfortunes of his life—and his spirit

If you want to be a motivator, you must first be an appreciator.

gets dragged through the mud of negativity. Pessimism becomes his natural reaction, to where he fails to see any good, even in an all-good situation.

30. Now, let's translate that example into appreciation: Appreciation not only boosts the warmth and brotherhood of a Home, but more importantly it shines a positive light on each individual. When you are truly appreciating someone from your heart, their quirks and problems and lacks seem so much less significant, because you see the glowing attributes that they bring to your Home. It's so much easier to gloss over the little differences and lacks, because your focus is on all the good they bring to the Home.

31. A lack of appreciation, on the other hand, makes it a lot easier to dwell on the blunders of others. You see their inabilities disproportionately, because without appreciation and genuine love and thankfulness for another person, the little nagging problems become distorted. They're enlarged, grossly enhanced, because they're not balanced by positive views and appreciation for others.

32. Always remember that love is the most important thing, and appreciation, trust, faith, and respect are all forms of love. So do the loving, humble thing and take the opportunity to voice your love and appreciation for others. People can never get enough of it! Then watch how these little steps can improve the morale and spirit of your Home for the better. The difference will be obvious.

Ask for the gift of understanding

33. (Mama:) Here's something interesting from our Husband about the gift of understanding and how it's connected to sincere appreciation.

34. (Jesus:) The kind of sincere love and desire that you need in order to appreciate and enhance others can only come from My Spirit. So this is the first and most important

Just as there is no substitute for oxygen, there is no substitute for a kind word.

step: Ask Me to give you a heart of love and understanding, as well as appreciation, for those around you.

35. And a good part of love and learning to sincerely appreciate others comes through acquiring the gift of understanding. Remember the proverb, "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out" (Pro.20:5)? The word "counsel" can be applied a few different ways, but I'll use it here in referring to each person's unique strengths and qualities. It takes a man or woman of understanding to draw those out. Sometimes finding those deep and unique qualities of spirit and character within each person is like lowering a bucket into a deep well. You wonder if you'll ever hit "water," or if the work will really be worth it.

36. But you see, you have to believe that each person has that "deep water;" and that water can only be reached and tapped into by exercising the gift of understanding. Once the key of understanding is called upon and activated, then you can lower the bucket of appreciation down into the well of each person's heart and draw out those wonderful waters. Truly understanding a person—how they think, how they react, what makes them tick, what they like and don't like—goes a long way toward sincerely appreciating them. Understanding always comes first; then true and sincere appreciation follows.

Active appreciation

37. (Mama:) I think that we all appreciate and dearly love those we live with. That's not usually the problem. However, often we just don't express it. We think thoughts of appreciation

and love, but we often don't take the time to verbalize what we think, or notice, or to say how thankful we are for someone. We're too proud, or lazy, or we forget, or we don't know how to express ourselves well, or we're just not in the habit, or we hold back for any number of other reasons.

38. While it's wonderful to have loving and appreciative thoughts toward others, that doesn't do a whole lot for those whom we love and appreciate. We have to do more than just think thoughts! We have to put those thoughts into words or actions. We have to be active in our appreciation, otherwise it doesn't do anyone else any good. Those we live with can't read our minds, and they're not going to "get it" or feel the vibes in the spirit. So we've got to overcome whatever is holding us back from being vocally and actively appreciative of others, and take the plunge.

39. (Dad:) It's often not really a question of whether you appreciate a person in the Home, because the more you work together as a team, the more you realize how essential each person is in forming the right team. In your heart and your mind you could be appreciating the people you live and work with, but how often do those thoughts of thankfulness toward another member of your Home come out of your mouth? How frequently do you verbally appreciate someone, commending them for their good work and their contributions to the Home?

40. Do you stop to convey your appreciation for the individuals in your Home on a regular basis? If not, why not? What holds you back from walking up to a brother or sister you work with and telling them how much you love and appreciate them? When someone works hard on something, or is stepping out to try something new, is your first reaction to praise them for their efforts, even if it didn't turn out as you had hoped or imagined? Do you turn your thoughts of appreciation into words? Do you talk well of others when they're not around?

41. There's a little secret about appreciation and making it a natural part of your interactions: It requires real love! If you truly love someone, you're going to want to shower them with commendation, appreciation, and thankfulness that will inspire them and let them know that you really care about them. You're not going to want to miss an opportunity to show them love and gratitude for their contributions to the Home and to your life.

42. People don't just "know" they're appreciated. People need to hear your praise, sense your respect, and feel your love, and the only way they're going to do so is if appreciation, love, and respect are elements of your interactions and communications. So don't miss the opportunity to tell someone you love and appreciate them. It could mean the difference between a good day or a difficult day for them.

43. Your words and your actions have the power to convey either a message of warmth, love, and respect, or one of mistrust, hesitancy, and distance. What message do your words and actions give to others?

44. (Mama:) After you read this GN, please determine to apply the counsel to your life: Be more appreciative of others. Don't let the Enemy dissuade you with thoughts like, "Well, if I start making more of an effort to say nice things to those I live with, or to encourage them, or to appreciate them for the things I notice, then they're going to think I'm only doing it because the Word says to do it. They're going to wonder if I'm sincere, and I'll probably wonder if others are sincere as well."

45. To start with, be sincere. Appreciation is all about sincerity. But with that important point solid, the

fact is that you—and others you live with—are going to be making more of an appreciation push because that’s what the Lord and Dad are telling us all to do. So accept that from the start. We’re all supposed to be doers of the Word. Don’t be so proud that you won’t do what the Word says to do just because you’re afraid that others will think, “Oh, you’re just doing that because the Letter said to.” So what if you’re doing it because the Letter said to! That’s the point—when the Word says to do something, we’re all supposed to do it.

46. This GN series is to provide training, and appreciation is something that we all need training in. Most of us need to be taught; most of us need pointers. This is like a workshop—first you read the instruction, and then you apply it. It might seem a little unnatural and it will be humbling at first when you start appreciating others more. But if you’re doing it sincerely and out of obedience, in time it will come naturally. The more you do it, the easier it will be; you won’t feel so awkward anymore.

47. Look at it as if you’re all on a big push together—your whole Home is in it together. The instruction to appreciate others more is a united assignment in this training course, so everyone should make an effort to do it together, in obedience—and, yes, because “the GN says so.” But if everyone’s doing it, it should be easier. Then you can keep doing it together until it becomes a solid habit. In time it will become natural and second nature for you to see the good in others and to appreciate them for it.

Taking appreciation a step further

48. (Mama:) Most of us don’t have too much trouble appreciating those we live with for the physical things they do. Although we could do better in this, and we certainly should, the point I’m making is that appreciating things we see people do is often easier than appreciating them for the deeper things, the spiritual things. It’s not too difficult to remember to thank the cook for the meal they prepared, and to appreciate them and tell them how yummy it was. (Although I’d venture to say that some of you could definitely stand to improve in the area of simple appreciation of this kind, because you often forget to verbalize your appreciation in this way.)

49. But in this next message the Lord talks about going deeper with our appreciation. There are things that we can appreciate others for, over and above the jobs they do or the ministries they take care of in the Home. We can show appreciation for physical things, of course—the way they look, something they’re wearing, or the fact that they smell pleasant. And we can also appreciate others for spiritual things, and make note of the things we notice that they’re strong in, as well as the sacrifices and good choices and decisions we see them make.

50. There’s so much that we can appreciate others for, but it takes effort on our parts. We have to get closer to people, talk to them more, find out about their preferences, likes, dislikes, history, things they’re going through, etc. We need to try and expand our “appreciation horizons,” and not stick to appreciating others for what we’ve always appreciated them for, or just the things that are simple and noticeable. It means so much to people when someone takes an interest in them, notices unique and special things about them, and takes appreciation to a deeper level.

51. (Jesus:) Most people can expend the effort needed in appreciating a person on a more “surface” or superficial level for

the job they do and what they contribute to a Home. Feeling fulfilled in your ministry or job and knowing that you contribute in a worthwhile way to the running of your Home is part of feeling appreciated, but I want to address something a little different here.

Appreciation is like breathing—a necessity.

52. I need you to learn a deeper, more heartfelt appreciation for each person, and not just for what they do. Deep, heartfelt, sincere appreciation and love is the real glue in forming “families” of winning teams. It goes deeper than just once in a while verbally appreciating what a person does, although that’s a part of appreciation.

53. The kind of appreciation and love I’m majoring on here is founded on the spirit, on forming deep bonds of love, trust, respect and mutual admiration and appreciation, regardless of what a person does.—Brotherly love, in other words, which is what the weapon of brotherhood is all about.

54. This means you must get to know each person. That takes effort. It takes work, and most of all it takes a sincere desire and awareness that this is an essential part of forming a winning team. You have to want to understand them, to want to look into each person’s soul and spirit with genuine interest, and then love and accept them for who and what they are—unconditionally.

55. After all, isn’t that what true brothers and sisters within a flesh family do? No matter what, that tie that binds you—the flesh, in the case of a flesh family—will never be broken. You’ll always be family. Ideally, I want the tie that binds flesh brothers and sisters strongly together within our Family to be translated to the greater Family. It is possible to have that same degree of love for your greater Family that you have for your flesh family, because I saw that love and that bond alive and real within My disciples and My early followers.—The kind of love in which one would truly lay down his life for others if need be.

56. “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one toward another” (John 13:35). That’s why you’re creating winning teams: to win the lost. And an important first ingredient is

having love and appreciation one toward another. That’s the beacon that will win others and draw them to Me.

57. This is not just about the “airy, fairy” kind of love that has no practical applications. I want to encourage you that there are practical pointers, tips, and aids in helping you to manifest more love and appreciation for your brothers and sisters. As you seek Me, you’ll no doubt come up with many of your own ideas and initiatives, but one of the first and most important ways to get started is in making a point to get to know your brothers and sisters.

58. Get to know their likes and dislikes, what means a lot to them and what they appreciate the most, even in the little things. When you’re aware of what things matter to people—even little things—you’re then better able to make it easy for others to be good, to make allowances for their weaknesses or struggles, and in turn, build on and use their strengths. This goes a long way toward helping that person to feel you really care about them. After all, you’ve taken the time and trouble needed to get to know them.

59. Once you’re aware of these personal things, then if I open the door and the opportunity arises, you’ll be able to do something for that person that really matters to them, something they really enjoy, or give them something they particularly like, or include

If you want to draw others into your life, you must first extend the invitation: appreciation.

If you want the “flower” of your Home to blossom, be generous with the “water” of appreciation you pour upon it.

them in some activity or outing or fellowship, so that they truly feel part of the “family.” There are all sorts of ways and opportunities to help someone feel loved, needed, and an important part of your Home’s “family” unit.

60. More often than not, it’s the little ways—those day-by-day little ways—that go a long way in sending the strong signal that you care. It shows that you’ve taken the time to connect with the person and to get to know what that person appreciates and needs in order to feel part of you and your life—part of a real “family.”

Don’t use appreciation as just a precursor to instruction

61. (Mama:) A problem that some people have is that they only appreciate or encourage someone before they’re going to say something negative to them or give them some instruction. It’s always good to encourage and appreciate others, especially if you’re pointing out something that they did that bugged you, or hurt you, or that you noticed was a little “off,” but that shouldn’t be the only time you appreciate other people. If that’s the case, then any time you appreciate someone, they’ll know it’s a precursor to some instruction you’re going to give them, and the appreciation doesn’t make them look forward to it.

62. I’m not saying you shouldn’t appreciate others before or during times when you’re talking about a problem, but if that’s the only time you express appreciation, that’s definitely wrong. You should appreciate others as often as you can, with no strings attached. Appreciate always. Then if you ever do appreciate someone in connection with other communication, it will

be much more easily accepted, because they’ll know you’re sincere, since you appreciate them regularly at other times.

63. (Dad:) A problem that sometimes comes up is that some people only convey appreciation when they have to correct another member of the Home, and that often gives people the wrong perspective on appreciation, making it a preliminary to correction or instruction. That’s not how it should be at all; appreciation should be a backbone element of your Home.

64. Having faith and trust in people, showing appreciation, commending individuals for the work they do, and being much quicker to appreciate than to correct—all of these things are like the oil that keeps the engine of your Home running smoothly. When you take time to extol another’s virtues, it softens their heart toward you; it makes them more open to receive other input you may have for them later.

Secondhand appreciation

65. (Mama:) We need to make more of a point to tell people the good things that we hear others say about them behind their backs, because it can mean so much to them. I’ve found that people often think the appreciation is more sincere, too, if it’s been said behind their back—not that they should think this way, but they very often do.

66. For example, if there’s a girl in your Home who doesn’t think she’s pretty at all, and you say to her personally, “I think you’re so

Never allow yourself to grow familiar with the awesome uniqueness of the people around you. It is in cherishing their individual traits and talents, and helping them to make the best use of them, that you enrich your own life.

pretty, Mary;” there’s a good chance she might take what you say with a grain of salt, or even disregard it completely—she shouldn’t, but unfortunately that’s often the case. But then if you were to go up to that same girl and recount something you had heard, such as, “You know, Mary, the other day when I was talking with Jane, she was mentioning how beautiful she thinks you are;” you’d probably have much more success. Mary might actually believe that someone thinks she’s pretty. It would have a much bigger impact on her.

67. Let’s make it a habit to pass on the sweet things that people say about others behind their back, shall we?

68. (Jesus:) There’s something extra special about finding out that someone was appreciating you, talking kindly about you, or complimenting you behind your back. Has that ever happened to you? If it has, you know exactly what I’m talking about. When you hear via someone else that another person was speaking well of you, it does wonders for your self-esteem; it gives you a boost that not many other things can.

69. Sometimes, being human as you are, it’s a temptation to think that if someone appreciates you or compliments you to your face, maybe they’re just trying to make you feel good, or they’re just being “loving” but not completely honest, or they’re exaggerating a bit, or they have ulterior motives. I’m not saying this is a good way to react, but the Enemy can sometimes tempt you to draw wrong conclusions like this, especially if you have a weakness with negativity.

70. But when you hear appreciation secondhand, it’s nearly impossible to brush it off. You know the person wouldn’t have had ulterior motives; they said what they said knowing that you would probably never hear it or know about it. They weren’t just trying to make you feel good; they were stating something that they believe to others. The Enemy has a lot less leeway to try and discredit the sincerity of the compliment or appreciation.

71. When someone speaks badly and gossips about you behind your back, there’s almost nothing worse. It hurts; it discourages; it is destructive. But when someone speaks kindly about you, appreciates you, and has complimentary things to say about you behind your back, there’s almost nothing better. It makes you feel good; it encourages you; it builds up your spirit and makes you feel loved. Everyone wants to know and feel that those they live and work with think well of them, and words fitly spoken behind someone else’s back are like “apples of gold in pictures of silver”—in other words, priceless (Pro.25:11).

72. So, if you’re ever in a conversation and you hear someone say something kind about someone else, make it a point to tell that person what you heard. Write it down if you have to, so you won’t forget. That little morsel of encouragement and appreciation might be just what that person needs to brighten their day or to help them through a rough time in their life. Remember it and pass it on.

Practical tips for appreciating others

73. (Mama:) After studying the preceding counsel, you should be raring to go! I pray that you’re eager to make appreciation more a part of your personal life and your Home. To help you along, here are some more practical tips from Dad to get you started.

74. (Dad:) How do you make appreciation more a part of your Home? It’s not as hard as you think, but it does require shedding some pride. That might make you squirm a little, but letting go of a little pride never hurt anyone for too long! Ha!

There’s a saying, “Tell her she’s beautiful and she’ll be beautiful.” Well, apply it!

75. Here are some simple practical tips to help you to learn the art of appreciation and make it more of a habit:

76. —Greet people in your Home, especially in the morning when you first see them. Even if it's just a simple, "Good morning, Phil" or "Hi, Tammy! Did you sleep well?"—a greeting like that sends the message that you notice the person and you pay attention to them.

77. —Affection is another form of appreciation, whether it's a hug, a pat on the back, a touch, or a stroke. Affection conveys a message of warmth and love, a feeling of comfort around each other.

78. —If someone does something well, openly commend them for it. Give the Lord the credit at the same time, but don't fail to praise the person too, appreciating them for their gifts and talents and how they contribute to the Home.

79. —Show appreciation for the little things, such as thanking someone for washing the dishes, putting the children to bed, making dinner, cleaning the bathroom or living room, etc. If they do a good job, emphasize that: "Jan, you do such a good job of keeping the living room clean and neat."

80. —Appreciate everyone, adults, teens, and children alike. Children need praise and recognition as much as adults and teens do, and vice versa.

81. —Have Home activities that focus on strengthening your bonds of brotherhood; take time to appreciate and praise each other. Pick names out of a hat, and thank the Lord for something specific about that person, whether it's a talent or gift; comment on a physical attribute that makes them stand out or be attractive; highlight a spiritual contribution that they make to the Home, and the positive effect it has; appreciate them for their ministry in the

Appreciation not only benefits the recipient; it also magnifies the giver.

Home and what you'd lack if they weren't a part of the Home. And don't stop there!

82. —Get to know people. When you don't really know someone, as

in knowing more about the person inside, you don't always have the love and respect for them that they deserve. So get to know each other. Talk together, have get-togethers where you share things about yourselves. It doesn't always have to be deep secrets; even generic topics about your family and background, or personal likes and dislikes, help you get to know a person better. You learn more about them, and your respect and love for them usually grows. You could exercise with someone, and as you're walking or jogging, use the chance to get to know them better.

83. —Praise the Lord for others. Praise is a formula for positiveness. When you're praising the Lord, it's a lot harder to notice flaws and so much easier to see the good, so praise the Lord for those you live and work with.

The cycle of love and appreciation

84. (Mama:) No matter what has held you back from dishing out sincere and regular appreciation in the past, you can change. You can begin today to enhance and aid others to achieve topnotch service to the Lord through simple acts and words of love and appreciation. When you think about it, it's amazing that something as simple as appreciation, which we're all very capable of, can have such major positive repercussions.

85. If we all make an effort and take small steps together, being more appreciative will become more a part of our nature.

It will also fill our Homes, enhancing the power of our love and unity, making us a better sample to the world and more effective witnesses. More appreciation within

Make appreciation like the beat of your heart—automatic.

our Homes translates into more love, and love is the most powerful force in the world!

86. (Jesus:) Think “enlarge” and “expand” when it comes to truly loving and appreciating others. That means enlarging the borders of your personal tent—which includes your own immediate family—to include others. Of course, you need quality time with your spouse and children, or your friends or those you’re closer to, but this time should never be to the neglect and exclusion of others on a regular basis.

87. All this will require stretching. Depending on how much you’ve already been exercising these muscles of including and appreciating others in a true “family” spirit, it may hurt. But I promise you that all the love, appreciation, and “expending” you personally do toward building a strong family spirit within your Home will come back to you.

88. Learning to be more appreciative will require stretching, but with that stretching you will in turn reap great love and great benefits. You will be fulfilling the prophecy I gave in which each of you, as you pour faithfully and unselfishly into others’ love cups, will in turn find your own love cup full to the brim and running over! (See ML #2985:33–34, Lifelines 22.) It’s a wonderful cycle of love and true brotherly appreciation, which will reap great, great rewards—here and now!

89. That’s the kind of brotherly love that forms winning teams. And in turn those winning teams will stand out in the midst of a darkening world, winning many to Me!

Talk About It

Optional discussion questions

- Brainstorm new, cool, and different ways to admire or appreciate others’ strengths, abilities, ministries, talents, gifts, etc., without using age-old sayings like, “You’re such a good ...” or “You’re so good at...” Think about new phrases that you can use

to kick off appreciation, such as, “It’s so awesome when you...” or “I wish I was more like you, because you...”—and you’ll probably think of many more.

- Pick a name of someone in the Home from a hat, and have as many people as possible in the room fill in the blanks of the following sentence (then continue with the rest of the Home members): “If ____ [name of any person in Home] were my brother/sister/husband/wife/daughter/son [whichever is most applicable to the person], I would probably include them in ____ [list whatever activities/projects/anything that you would consider doing with them if they were in your immediate family].” This helps you to realize situations and occasions in which you should be inviting others more into your life and time, because you are all one Family, One Wife.
- Pick a name of someone in the Home from a hat, and have as many people as possible in the room fill in the blanks of the following sentence (then continue picking names out of the hat until everyone has had a chance to be appreciated): “If ____ [name of any person in Home] left our Home tomorrow and we had no replacement for him/her, what wouldn’t get done, how would that affect me personally, how would that affect our Home overall, what would I miss the most about him/her?” All these things are things you should already be appreciating and thanking that person for. This is a good check to see if you have been faithful with your appreciation.
- Talk about what type of appreciation you value the most and why. For example, do you prefer compliments and appreciation about your appearance, or a personality trait, or your work, or an accomplishment, or a talent, or a spiritual gift?
- Discuss what makes it difficult for you to give appreciation to others, and have prayer to overcome the hindrance.

Praise Ideas

Optional praise ideas

- *“In his shoes” praise:* Put everyone’s name in a hat or bowl. Pass it around and each person picks a name. Each person will begin by saying whose name they picked, and then putting on one piece of that person’s clothes, accessories or jewelry. For example, say Jane picks Peter’s name. She will put on one item of his clothing—it can be his shoes, his hat, his sweater, his shirt, his vest, his pants, or whatever Peter is willing to take off. Then, with Jane in Peter’s “shoes,” she will praise the Lord for something she really admires, appreciates, or loves about Peter. Then the next person will do the same. (Each person can return the borrowed item after they complete their praise, so that they don’t have to wear it for the entire duration of the praise time.)
- *“As if” praise:* Everyone can pick a Home member’s name from a hat, and keep it a secret who they picked. Then someone will begin by praising the Lord for something about the person whose name they drew, as if they were that person. For example, John picks Mary’s name. John wants to praise the Lord for her ability to take care of kids, but will praise as if he is Mary. He’d say something like, “Thank You, Jesus, for the gift You’ve given me of caring for the children and training them!” And everyone can try to guess whose name he picked. Then it will go on to the next person, and the next. (Note: It may be a little odd to praise the Lord for something like Mary’s humility, as if you were her, as that would come out like, “Thank You, Jesus, that You’ve made me so humble!”—Ha! Or, if you’re a male and you’re praising the Lord for how pretty Mary is, that might also come out a bit wrong. So think through your praise before speaking, to avoid embarrassment.)

- *First letter appreciation:* Go around the room and call out each person’s name, and then praise the Lord in popcorn style for a few things that “fit” that person, but that also start with the same letter as their name. For example, for “Christopher” you could say things like “crazy faith,” “caring,” and “calm spirit.” This is not as easy as it might seem, so leave the floor open for at least a minute or so, for people to be able to come up with more than just a couple of the most obvious ones. (Note: If someone in the group has a name that starts with a less common letter of the alphabet, and you have a hard time coming up with praises that start with that letter, then just move to the second letter of their name, or even use the end letter of their name if that’s easier.)

“Do” the Word

Optional practical ways to be “doers of the Word”

- Each day, pray about and secretly choose one person in the Home whom you want to sincerely appreciate. Then it’s your duty to find genuine qualities or things they’ve done that day which you appreciate, and to tell them so. You can do this until you’ve dedicated one day to each person in your Home, and then pray and ask the Lord for a new idea to keep up the progress you’re making.
- You shouldn’t let a day go by that you haven’t appreciated at least one person in your Home. Your Home can make a united push on it, to provide more of an incentive. You can each pick a name of a Home member, and then each day of the week, write down one thing for the day that you genuinely appreciated about the person whose name you picked. You can either give them this write-up at the end of each day, or you can compile your list and give it to the person at the end of the week. This will greatly encourage each of

you to know that others do notice you and appreciate the part you play in the Home.

- Pick one person, or a couple of people, whom you want to include during your free day and do something together with. Try to pick someone you don't usually hang out with or know that well, someone whom you may even have a hard time getting close to. Draw them into your circle of friendship and enjoy their fellowship. Then thank them for spending that time with you, and this will do wonders for your unity, your interactions with that person, and your love and appreciation for them, as well as theirs for you.
- Try some of these appreciation questions during a Home meeting or activity:
 - Name a Letter or GN that made you feel encouraged or appreciated, and explain why.
 - If you were with _____ [fill in with name of a Home member] in a dangerous and scary situation [such as in prison, or lost in a forest at night], what is something you'd appreciate about him or her that would specifically help you?
 - Which fruit of the Spirit do you feel that _____ [fill in with name of a Home member] manifests most obviously, and why?
 - What's something about _____ [fill in with name of a Home member] that would make him/her a good husband/wife (even if they're not presently a husband or wife)? [For example, "I think that Sam would make a good husband because he's an excellent cook, and that would add spice to a marriage."]
 - In what way does _____ [fill in with name of a Home member] encourage you?
- Have some "personnel" parties over a period of time. Cater the party to people who hold a certain ministry in your Home. There could be a dinner they like and some kind of appreciation time afterwards that would be specifically

related to what they do. It wouldn't need to be a big thing, but it would remind everyone that their Home might not work as well without the specific ministries that "so-and-so" and "so-and-so" have a part in. It would also help people to value their ministry when they see that others appreciate and recognize what an important part of the Home it is.

- Organize specific appreciations for the various age groups. For example: To appreciate the children, organize a special outing or a nice snack; the young people can organize a special evening in the FGAs' honor, and vice versa; appreciate your teens by organizing a movie out for them; appreciate the teachers by giving them an extra day off. There are a huge variety of ways you could do this, but the idea is that doing special things to show appreciation to a specific group of people in the Home is encouraging to the individuals, and it engenders unity as each one appreciates the other for all that they contribute.

Anecdote

One day the letters of the alphabet got together and decided to vote someone off the keyboard.

"It's too crowded here," said A, who was quite sure of his place, being a major vowel. "I suggest we kick some of these rarely used letters off and things will be more spacious for all of us, not to mention that it will be easier for people to learn to type because there will be fewer of us to learn."

"Let's start with Z," said P, happy to shift the focus down to the opposite end. "He could easily be replaced by S for everything he needs to do."

So they gave Z the boot and tried it. It went fine at first, but no one knew what to make of "soo" or "quis," and "jass" just wasn't the same. Plus S got more work and his key started to stick a little. He, in fact, asked if they could bring back Z, which they all agreed to do.

Undaunted, however, they tried replacing C with K, but words like “khew” just didn’t work, and they had no better luck ditching Q. True, Q was not as busy as the rest of them, but she filled a niche with her friend U (who left in anger when Q left) and made words like “queen” that “keen” just couldn’t make up for.

Even haughty A took his blows when they turned on him in frustration, trying to substitute o for him. Maybe “opple” could pass, but when “that” turned to “thot,” there was a lot of confusion.

No one knows for sure who solved the conflict, but it’s rumored that Spacebar was the first to suggest that they were all practically indispensable. Sure, some carried more of a load than others, but each had his place, and to try to make do without anyone only increased their work, as holes were left that none could adequately fill.

However it happened, they agreed to leave the keyboard intact—much to the relief of Backspace and Spellcheck.

Hot Key: ESP

90. (Jesus:) Call on the key of ESP and My extrasensory perception power will help you to perceive My anointing upon others. As you claim the ESP key, your spiritual and physical sight will be opened to see others’ qualities and skills. Their training will come to light; their abilities to do the job; their talents that fill in for your lacks. You’ll not only see with extrasensory sight, but you’ll learn to appreciate your teammates and you will become more aware that you can’t do the job without their help.

Prayer Boost

91. (Prayer:) Thank You that we are so richly blessed. We not only have so much to praise and thank You for—all of the many blessings You daily bestow upon us—but we also have so much to thank and appreciate others for.

We have brothers and sisters who we can trust, count on, and grow to be better disciples with. We live with people who we know are sincere, who love You, and who we know won’t cheat us or con us. We’re so blessed, unlike those in the world who hardly know who to trust.

92. Our brothers and sisters are loving and kind, sacrificial and giving, faithful and loyal, hard-working and dedicated, and so much more. Within our Family we have excellent cooks, professional teachers and caregivers, anointed drivers, skilled handymen, efficient office workers, amazing shepherds, outgoing witnesses, smart businessmen and women, artistic interior decorators, and so much more! We have so much to appreciate in each other, so please help us to do that more, dearest Jesus.

93. Give us a keen eye for the good qualities in those we live with. Help us to focus more on the positive than the negative. Help us to see past the surface and to look deeper. And when we notice things, help us not to be too proud or lazy to say something, to appreciate, to show our thankfulness and gratitude. Help us to overcome whatever is holding us back from giving generous amounts of sincere appreciation to those we live and work with.

94. We call on the key of ESP, which You promised will give us extrasensory perception power to help us to see the good in others and learn to appreciate them more. We call on any spirit helpers that You can give to aid us in this area. Send the Elixir of Love to give us an outgoing love and concern for others, and the desire to express the good we see in our teammates every day. We rebuke Pride, or Lethargy, and anything else that would hold us back from being active appreciators.

95. We claim through the power of the keys that our Home will begin to overflow with a spirit of appreciation. We want our Home to be filled with love and kind thoughts and words and actions. So please change each of us so that we can be new creatures, so that we can do our part to have an appreciation revolution.

VARIETY

The Brief

96. (Mama:) Winning teams know that having a variety of people within a Home is not a handicap but an asset. They see the variety in personalities, ages, marital status, nationalities, likes and dislikes, and all the things that make each person unique as a blessing, not a burden. They realize that the Lord has created their Home with variety for a reason, and they know that it aids them in being winners. The Family is made up of the younger and the older, the weaker and the stronger, but we're all in the same boat together.

97. Members of winning Homes embrace the differences in others, knowing that it's those differences that make their Home fun, balanced, and one of a kind. They realize what a blessing it is to live with disciples who are different than they are, because life would be boring if everyone were the same. They try to work together well, appreciate the uniqueness of every individual, and dovetail to create a strong team that Jesus can use to the full.

Pointers for Winning Teams

Variety makes a well-rounded team

98. It's important for winning teams to consist of a variety of different personalities, with different gifts and talents. It makes for a well-rounded team. It's a good thing, not a bad thing.

99. We need to get away from looking at differences—in personality, age, background, marital status, etc.—as handicaps. We need to see these differences as the wonderful blessing

they are. Just as a tapestry is not made up of all the same color strands, neither is a well-balanced Home made up of all of the same type of people. You need all types to make a beautiful picture.

100. The best Homes are those that are filled with variety, and that includes young people, older people, children, married people, single people, males and females. When you give the Lord a lot of variety to work with, He can create a masterpiece of your Home.

101. (Jesus:) A lot of people who accomplished great things in the world, and great things for Me, didn't necessarily think they had great personalities, and neither did those around them. In fact, many of the greats were considered a bit odd, eccentric, too young or too old or too radical. They often didn't fit the mold, but they were talented, skilled, and accomplished what they set out to accomplish.

102. I created all the personalities in the world, and I use all kinds of people to do My will. Some are odd characters, and some may not be your favorite type of personality. Maybe they're too bold or too shy, too corny or too serious, but because they love Me and have dedicated their lives to Me, I will use them greatly.

Variety and diversity are like rain; they keep your Home alive and fresh, watered and nurtured by change, new ideas, and inspiration.

103. Don't base your decision on who you will work with on their personality; that would be a very poor way to judge who I choose to anoint. Personality is not that important when it comes to a person's ability to be prayerful, to be wise and spirit-led, to be committed and to uphold the standard. Look beyond personality and see My anointing upon them; see their potential to be a good Home member.

104. Remember that some of the oddest characters in history were the people I chose and anointed to do great things. If you pass someone up based purely on their personality, you could be losing out on a very valuable member of your Home. Then another Home will get the benefit and the blessing of their contribution. Everyone has something to offer, even if it's not something obviously "great," like the great men and women I mentioned. It doesn't always mean you have to do great things to be great and to be in the center of My will.

105. So don't evaluate people by what you think they should be like or how you think they should act. Each person is unique; I made them that way, quirks and all. And remember, you have quirks, too, that everyone else in your Home has to live with. Personality differences are for a good reason, and that is to provide variety, different ideas or outlooks on situations, varied approaches to problems, different interests, and different talents in order to do all of the jobs.

106. If everyone in the Home was exactly the same and had the same personality, it would be very samey. It would border on being boring, without the spice and variety and newness that each personality brings to the Home. Sometimes the oddest characters are the people who make the biggest difference in other people's lives. They leave the most lasting impression of My love, because they know they are nothing without Me, and they lean on Me and give Me all the glory.

All members of the Home contribute to make the whole, but if all are too much the same, that "whole" is incomplete.

107. Don't limit your Home to only young people because you think they are the ones who can get the most done, because then you will miss out on the wisdom and maturity of the older generation. Don't limit your team to only go-getter types because you think they're the only ones bold enough to reach the top, to witness and raise funds, because then you'll miss out on the quality, in-depth ideas of the shier types.

108. You need variety in age and personalities to make a well-rounded team. You need those who will contribute the talents and skills peculiar to them. So when choosing someone to join your Home, look at their heart, their love and dedication, their willingness to learn and work together with others.

Don't judge value by contributions

109. (Mama:) Whatever you do, dear Family, don't judge the value of a Home member by their contributions. For example, there are a lot of Family members who are getting older and can't carry as heavy a load as they used to. And there are single parents who, to the carnal way of looking at things, bring more work than help to the Home, especially if they have a number of children. And then there are the children themselves, who create more work than they carry.

110. If you're looking at things through the eyes of the flesh, you won't want to invite anyone to your Home who isn't fit as a fiddle and able to carry a heavy load. But that's definitely not the Lord's way. He wants you to look deeper, to see the wonderful benefits you will gain if you open your arms to receive that

single parent, or that large family, or that FGA who is battling with afflictions.

111. He wants you to look further than what that person contributes in the physical, to see things in the spirit—the strength or balance that person will bring to your Home, the maturity and prayerfulness of that FGA, the life and fun and spark that those children will bless your lives and Home with, or perhaps the extra blessings your Home will receive for putting the needs of others before your own.

112. (Jesus:) I want to take this opportunity to talk about something that brings grief to My heart. Oftentimes, Home personnel are judged or labeled by how much they can contribute to the Home, or the support they can bring in. Instead of looking on people as those who love Me and want to serve Me, they are looked upon as a commodity and judged by how much they can help bring in financially.

113. This is especially true in the case of FGAs who are older and slowing down, those who have a chronic illness, single parents, large families, or a family with a handicapped child, etc. These people are often looked upon as liabilities instead of assets, because for various reasons they are not going to be able to physically contribute as much as someone who is healthy or young or single, or as much as a young couple with few children. However, My loves, the Family is not made of only singles, or couples with few children.

114. There is a place for all My brides to serve Me in the capacity they wish, but it is going to mean sacrifice on the part of others in order for it to work. I have told you

many times in My Word and in many ways that I bless sacrifice. When you sacrifice for another, you both benefit. Maybe that person who is ill and needs extra care can't go out on the streets every day getting out *Activated* and raising support, but they can be a prayer warrior, make provisioning calls, and minister to the sheep through the mail.

115. Maybe that single mom with kids has to stay at home to teach and train her young ones, but she is making an investment in them and in the future, so that they in turn will grow up to be disciples for Me. That single mom may not be able to get out every day witnessing or raising support, but her children's friendly smiles and warm hugs can win over your sheep and cause them to want to give to and support the work. Maybe that FGA has to get extra rest and eat special foods, but he or she has years of wisdom and knowledge from serving Me and is a good counselor and guide in decision making.

116. As well, having those in your Home who need a little extra care, or who can't pull a full load as well as someone else, teaches you to have compassion, understanding, mercy, love, unselfishness, and to go the extra mile. It also gives Me an avenue to do the miracles needed to either compensate for that person not being able to carry a full load, or to supply their special needs. It causes others to have to carry a bit of an extra load, but with that sacrifice I am well pleased, and it causes Me to shower even more blessings upon them and upon their Home.

117. Everyone has something to contribute, and My brides need to stop judging their mates by how much they can do for the Home physically or materially, and start looking at some of the other contributions they can make, especially spiritually, as assets as well. A Home cannot always be judged by how well they are doing in the physical. You may have a nice, big house, many sheep, *Activated*

Balance brings harmony—the harmony of individuals working together to bring out the best in each other.

shiners, lots of provisioning contacts, and a one-month financial buffer. But if you are snubbing those who are weaker or need extra care, help or attention, or refuse to share your abundance with

Each person has something special to offer—from the youngest to the oldest.

those who are in need, or have the room but don't want to take in someone who needs extra care and attention, then you are no better than the priest and the Levite who passed by the poor man on the road to Jericho (Luke 10:30–37).

118. Each one in My Family is valuable to Me, each one is needed, but unfortunately many have been left feeling discouraged, frustrated, and forsaken because they have not been able to find people who are willing to work with them. A “winning team” is not a team only made up of strong, able-bodied, energetic, problem-free people. A winning team comprises those who work together, who are loving, giving, yielded, compassionate, kind, tender-hearted, unselfish and sacrificial. I look on the heart, My loves, and not on the outward appearance.

119. Are you following Me and My will as you put your team together, hearing from Me step by step and being willing to give and sacrifice to form the team I want you to have? Or are you only interested in money and stats and comfort and convenience? What will it be? The choice is yours!

Variety is fun

120. (Mama:) There are definitely obstacles to overcome in a Home with all kinds of different personalities. You need to learn to get to know one another, to understand what makes each other tick, to learn how to work with others, and sometimes there can be friction along the way as you iron out the kinks. But setting the problems aside, which are pretty insignificant in the big picture, having variety can be a lot of fun!

121. It can be a blast to promote an atmosphere of individuality and variety in your Home, within godly bounds, of course. If you're fighting against the fact that everyone is

different by trying to make those you live with think like you, do things like you, or agree with you on everything, then that's a big bummer. But if you embrace the uniqueness of everyone in the Home, realize that everyone is different, thinks differently, and likes different things, then you'll be able to enjoy yourselves together and have a whole world of fun.

122. Don't squelch the fire, ideas, or inspirations of those in your Home, even if they seem wacky. It's part of the Lord's plan for Homes to have such variety, within His will. And the best part about having such variety in your Home, and enjoying it, is that when individuals feel free to be themselves and not be conformed to a mold, they're happier. Thus your whole Home will be happier.

123. (Jesus:) Everyone has their differences, their oddities, although some may be more pronounced than others. The goal is not to get everyone to be the same, to put everyone in the same little mold or box. Rather, the goal is to learn to love and accept each other the way you are, while progressing and moving forward in the spirit, and find ways to join together to accomplish the plan I have for you. Of course, I'm not referring to serious spiritual problems, unyieldedness, and attacks of the Enemy, but other personality traits that merit love and acceptance.

124. Think of each person on your team, yourself included, as a piece of a beautiful puzzle. If the puzzle is joined together correctly, with the proper pieces interlocking at the proper junctions and in the right way, then a complete picture is formed.

Dealing with differences

125. (Mama:) After reading the preceding messages, you should be convinced of the need to have variety in your Home, and know that it's a good thing. But maybe you're wondering about that person (or few people) in your Home who rubs you the wrong way. Maybe your personalities don't jibe, or they're much older or younger than you and you don't understand them, or they're a member of the opposite sex and their ways puzzle you, or they're a different nationality or speak a different language than you do, and this is difficult for you, or you find them a little odd for any number of reasons—and, who knows, they may feel the same way about you!

126. Every person is different, with backgrounds, personalities, and even idiosyncrasies and other things that make them unique, and even difficult to get along with at times. But the key in relating to and working with people is to ask the Lord how you should look at things. Ask Him: "How should I look at the specific personality traits or idiosyncrasies that this person has?" Sometimes it's something that the Lord has given a person as a specific weakness that will always keep them humble before Him and others. Sometimes it's to keep you humble, because you're not just loving those who are easy for you to love; reaching out to others in love is humbling. Sometimes it's to teach you lessons of patience and understanding.

127. Our Husband loves each of us, His brides, in spite of the weaknesses He has given us to balance out our strengths, or even the things that are a part of our nature. So it's important to praise Him for that person in your Home who has weaknesses or idiosyncrasies that bother you—whether it's because they're older or younger than you, or for whatever other reasons—because if they were perfect, they'd be much more difficult for you to live with. Also, realize that they're also putting up with

you and may find you just as difficult to live with because you're different than they are.

128. Learn to see others the way the Lord does, with the same love, understanding, and patience that He has for them, knowing that there's a good chance that they—or others—are manifesting a lot of love and understanding and patience by living with you and putting up with all your eccentricities, problems and differences. And thank the Lord that He also uses the situation to keep you close to Him, able to relate to others, and flexible.

129. There will be times when you'll live with someone you consider odd, or whose personality is as far from yours as night is from day, or who you just don't understand or like. But you still need to learn to love and accept them. They're a part of your winning team, and their contributions to the Home make it what it is. The Lord loves them and accepts them, and so should you. When you have an attitude of acceptance and understanding of those you live with, an attitude that acknowledges their personality and differences, and yet is tolerant and willing to love them regardless, then you are becoming more like Jesus.

130. (Jesus:) It helps to keep in mind that everyone is different—even you. Some people might seem more different to you than others, or their personality or history or age or background make it more of a challenge for you to get along, and while this may test your patience and you might wish they would be easier to understand and work with, remember that those people also help to keep you humble and lowly in your own eyes. Those who you

Variety is not just the spice of life; it's an essential ingredient for a winning team.

have a hard time living or working with humble you because they remind you that you need Me and My love. You don't have enough love within yourself; your own love falls short.

131. If you have someone in your Home whom you find eccentric and odd, simply because they're different than the way you are, remember the type of people I personally chose to work with when I was on Earth. Peter was impetuous and eccentric; James and John, "the sons of thunder," were rash and sometimes angry; Mary Magdalene was in the flesh; Thomas had a skeptical streak; Judas was materialistic; and many of the prophets that My Father called for important purposes were considered eccentric and odd.

132. If I've put someone in your Home who you can't figure out or understand because of their personality traits, or because they're different than you are and you feel you can't relate to them as well as you can to others, remember that I understand them perfectly. They love Me and are dedicated to My will and My calling for them, just as you are. They are motivated by love for Me, and this is what keeps them going through the good times and the tough times. Their desire to please Me is what keeps them inspired and causes them to work hard.

133. Remember that just because you consider someone's personality a bit odd, that doesn't mean they don't have to fight the same battles you do, the same battles everyone else does. They still have to get desperate in prayer before Me and call on their spirit helpers and the power of the keys

to help them to fight their battles. They have spiritual battles and are under attack by the Enemy every day of their lives, and in some cases, the battles are even more intense and difficult for them because they think you consider them odd or different, or they think you don't like them—people can sense it, you know. Many times they not only have to fight the Enemy's typical attacks, but they have to fight their own private battles because you have made them feel ostracized.

134. Love and understanding aren't just for the people that you like or whom you work well with. It's not reserved only for the people you choose to be loving and understanding toward. The keys of love and understanding are even more important for those you don't particularly like or understand. If someone in your Home has a personality trait that rubs you the wrong way, don't try to ignore it or brush it off; seek Me for the key to your working relationship with that person. Don't let a wall be built between you that will hinder your working relationship and the fruitfulness of your Home. Personality traits are not impossible to understand—age, sex, backgrounds, and other barriers are not insurmountable—and if you seek Me for the love and understanding you need, I will give it to you.

135. Come to Me for step-by-step counsel and I will show you exactly how to interact with people. I will give you the specific communication tips you need that will help you to understand each other. Talk with your Home shepherds for additional input and counsel. Resist the temptation to look at someone as a thorn in your flesh. Don't allow yourself to think that "if they only weren't in our Home, everything would be okay." Resist the Enemy's spin on things that makes you feel that certain people are a burden and a weight. Remember that I allow these situations and these very people to help teach and train you to become what I want you to be.

Love washes over a multitude of differences in personalities and bridges gaps that are not normally bridged.

136. All of those in your Home are My brides. Even if you feel that they are odd in some ways, their sacrifices and battle wounds and their love for Me are very precious in My sight. Ask

Variety makes pictures prettier, food yummier, and winning teams happier.

Me for the love you need. Call on the power of the keys for the anointing, understanding, and whatever you need to help you to see those you have a difficult time getting along with through eyes of faith. Call on the keys of positiveness to help you to appreciate their gifts and talents to the full, and to be thankful for them. Resist the Enemy's negative spin that will only drain you of your faith and the blessings that come from walking in a spirit of faith and treating others with the respect, love, and understanding that each person deserves.

The purpose of strengths and weaknesses

137. (Mama:) **It's very important, as the Lord said above, to "resist the Enemy's spin on things that makes you feel that certain people are a burden and a weight."** Sometimes we think certain people might be a burden or weight because of their weaknesses. But it's important to remember that your Home would not be as effective if everyone had the same strengths. Creating a Home of people with similar strengths and weaknesses will do more harm than good in the long run.

138. (Jesus:) **Having a well-balanced Home is not achieved by gathering a group of individuals who all think alike, who have the same strengths and weaknesses, or who react similarly.** You might feel like you have an effective Home, with a reasonable amount of unity, because there might be fewer clashes or problems. But just because the members of your team tend to be alike in many ways, you won't necessarily have a balanced Home, and you could miss out on the deep kind of unity

that is forged through living and working with a variety of individuals.

139. It's similar to a marriage. I seldom if ever put together a man and woman who are so

alike. In fact, I frequently put together couples who are opposites in many ways. I do this so that the husband and wife can lend each other their strengths. If the wife has a stronger gift of prophecy than the husband, I will use the wife to encourage the husband in his gift. If the husband is more soft-spoken and less pushy than the wife, then I will use his strength of humility to help the wife to grow and change and progress.

140. It's the same in a Home. I allow—and even encourage—you to work together with those who have different strengths and weaknesses. I do this so that each person can use their strengths to benefit their teammates. The goal is that the one who is stronger in an area will humbly and lovingly encourage his teammates to grow in that way—not in a pushy, forceful way, but in My Spirit.

141. When you have a strength in a certain area, you're not to lord it over others, but to humbly lift them up and be the support they need. You need to see your abilities and strengths as tools for encouraging another's faith to step out and grow. And when you see strengths in others, you should learn and benefit from them, rather than resent them because you're not as strong in that area. Learn to tap into the strengths of others to enhance your life.

142. Weak areas or inadequacies that people have are not weights and burdens. Weak areas are potentially strong areas; they should be seen as challenges. So don't dismiss someone from your Home, or not even consider bringing them into your winning team, because of the weaknesses you see in them. Those

weaknesses might be turned into their greatest strengths in time, as they receive loving shepherding, and as you live and work together in love and humility, helping to lift one another up instead of putting each other down.

Don't judge someone for what they do; love them for who they are.

143. Everybody has weaknesses. Everybody has strengths. But I did not give you your strengths so that you could glory in them, so that you could lift yourself up—and put down others who don't have that same strength. I gave you your strengths so that you could humbly and lovingly support others. I want your strengths to lift others up, not to make them feel incompetent or inadequate.

144. Every strength that you possess is for the purpose of benefiting others, benefiting your team. And every weakness can be turned into a strength as you depend on Me and My powerful keys, and tap into the support and help of others.

Don't impose your preferences on others

145. (Mama:) It's very important to the happiness of Home members to be able to exercise their individuality, within the guidelines of the Word, and it's equally important that everyone is able to operate according to their own faith in personal matters. But imposing your personal likes, dislikes, preferences, and ways of doing things on others is not the way to go, and will only bring division, discontentment, and unhappiness to your Home.

146. For example, this often happens with recreational preferences. Of course, everyone has different likes when it comes to what they do for recreation. Some people like to spend time in the great outdoors. Others like to sleep. Others like to cook and eat. Others like to fellowship and “chill.” Others like to watch movies or read a book. And just

because you might happen to like to go hiking when you have time off doesn't mean that you should try to convert everyone in the Home to your preference, or condemn the guy who

likes to sleep for being lazy.

147. Or don't put down the fact that someone in the Home likes to play a computer game when they take time off, just because you don't. If they're operating within the guidelines of the Word, then it is okay that they engage in this kind of variety in preferences. Don't pooh-pooh someone else's preferences or likes or dislikes or ways of doing things because it's not your personal cup of tea. People's likes and dislikes vary considerably in a number of areas—including entertainment, food, fun, dress styles, etc.—and as long as what they're doing is according to the Word and within the standards and guidelines you have agreed on as a Home, then it's fine.

148. Don't try to put people in your “box.” It won't go over well and will just create problems and a lack of unity. Accept others for the way they are and the things they like, without trying to push your program on them.

149. (Jesus:) I give you a huge amount of leeway when it comes to things like preferences, ways of doing things, ways of dressing, and things you like to do for fun. I don't force people into a mold, so don't you be guilty of it either. I have given you your preferences and the things you like and the way you like to do things, and I have given others preferences and things they like and ways they like to do things. It's a part of the way I made you—different!

150. Don't self-righteously think that what you like is the best, or the way you do things is the best way, or the things you choose to do for fun are more wholesome

than what someone else chooses to do. Maybe what you do is best for you, but might not be best for the other person. So trust that I have given them their desires, and that I'm speaking to them about the things they do, and unless something is against the Word or the Charter, then just zip your lip. Embrace the differences! Be happy about them. Support your fellow Home members in the things they like, even if you don't feel the same personally.

151. Expand your horizons a bit. Realize that there's a whole world of things that others enjoy that maybe you aren't keen on. But that's the fun of life—that everyone is different, that no two people are the same. I take pleasure in the variety, and I would like you to do the same. Appreciate the uniqueness of others. Praise Me for the similarities and the differences. But whatever you do, don't impose your preferences—or the way you think things ought to be—on others. Trust Me, it's not My will and it won't make anyone happy.

More on variety

152. (Mama:) For the last message on this topic, and for a bit more variety, here's a short and interesting message from our Husband on variety. Ha! Thank You, Jesus, for variety and all its benefits!

153. (Jesus:) There's so much variety in life that makes living interesting. There's variety in the colors of a rainbow. There's variety in seasons. There's variety in the types of fruits and vegetables I've created. There's variety in skin color, eye color, and hair color. There's variety in nationalities. There's variety in countries and climates. There's variety in many of the things that you enjoy and that make you happy.

154. Variety makes you happy. Variety is a fact of life. Variety is cool. Variety keeps things from getting dull, boring, or routine. Variety shakes up the applectart. Variety keeps

you from getting old and rigid; it keeps you young in spirit. Variety keeps you revolutionary. Variety is a human need. Variety is something that I created for a reason.

155. Variety will help to make your Home better, happier, and more balanced. So embrace variety in all its forms—variety in personnel, in preferences, in ages, in nationalities, in spiritual qualities, in talents and gifts, and so much more. Then your Home will be colorful, lively, fun, happening, out-of-the-ordinary, and most importantly, it will be more fruitful and successful in My service.

156. (Question:) The Lord is saying so much about the benefits of variety in this GN, which is great. But it makes me wonder, "What if we don't have so much variety of personnel in our Home? Are we sunk?"

157. (Jesus:) Sometimes I do put you in a situation that doesn't have as much variety. Maybe your Home is mainly FGAs, or young people, or you have no children, or you are all the same nationality. That doesn't necessarily mean your Home will not be a success. If you're in My will, you will be a success, and I can help you to have variety in other ways.

158. But the thing to remember is that it's generally My will for you to have variety in your Home when it comes to personnel—if and when possible. And if it is possible to have that variety, but you don't want it for some reason—either because you don't want to invite young people to your Home, or you don't want to have children, or you don't want the older folks, or you're selfish or stuck

in a rut or afraid of change—then you're not going to be the best Home you can be. You'll be missing out on many of My blessings and the spark of variety.

Talk About It

Optional discussion questions

- How do you feel your Home balances out as far as variety in your personnel? Do you feel that you are lacking in a certain area? For example, do you have few or no children? Or few or no young people?
- Discuss whether you need more personnel, and if so, what type of personnel you need to complete your Home, and bring in a good variety and balance.
- Talk about whether you would be open to inviting someone to your Home, even if outwardly it didn't seem like they would be a big boost on the work front, and that it might even be more work and a sacrifice to receive them. Discuss some hypothetical scenarios. For example, talk about how someone who is older (say in their 60s or 70s) and physically weaker could still be a blessing in the Home, and in what areas they could contribute. Talk about how having a large family, or a single parent with a number of children, would benefit the Home. Or think about someone who is battling a serious long-term affliction and needs love and care. Along with discussing ways they could or would contribute to the Home, talk about the spiritual blessings and benefits that come from opening your hearts to receive others and give to them.

**An effervescent Home
is filled with the fizz of
variety.**

Praise Ideas

Optional praise ideas

- *Variation praise:* Each person thinks of something they like that has a lot of variety or variations, and thanks the Lord for some of the specific variations that they like/enjoy/appreciate without mentioning the main topic. Try to be imaginative. Some examples of easy topics are: food (but get more specific, like pizza toppings, spices, fruit, etc.), flowers, variety in women's bodies, animal families, colors, etc. In your praise you'd start to name as many varieties as you could, until someone guesses the topic (obviously some topics will be easier to guess than others), and the first person who guesses starts on their topic. For example, if someone is praising the Lord for pizza, they would start praising for cheese, olives, ham, pineapple (or whatever their favorite toppings are), until someone guessed "pizza."
- *Age groups praise:* Name the different age groups in the Home, and pause after each one for popcorn-style praises of cool things about the folks in that age group—any of the blessings you can think of that they bring into your life or your Home.
- *Mystery person praise:* Everyone can pick a Home member's name from a hat, and keep it a secret who they picked. Then someone will begin by praising the Lord for something about the person whose name they drew, without saying their name. For example, "Thank You, Jesus, for the gift You've given my mystery person of caring for the children and training them!" And everyone can try to guess who the person is. Then it will go on to the next person, and the next.

“Do” the Word

Optional practical ways to be “doers of the Word”

- If your Home is not as well rounded as it could be, or you’re in need of more personnel, pray and ask the Lord specifically what type of people to invite to the Home that would complement and add the variety you need, and then ask the Lord how to go about looking for those people.
- Play a likes/dislikes game, in order to get to know one another better, and to gather hints of some of the things those in your Home like, to appreciate the variety in your Home. (This actually makes a fun party game, or something interesting to do over a nice evening meal.) Give each person in the room a slip of paper. Everyone writes down five things that they really like, and five things that they intensely dislike. Each person should try to think of unique things, or things that everyone in the Home might not know about, to make the game more interesting. Then one person collects all of the slips of paper and reads off the lists one by one, while everyone guesses which likes/dislikes belong to whom.
- Learn more about and appreciate the “variety” in your Home. Take the time to plan an activity evening, and let people know in advance what the topics will be. Ask everyone to prepare a contribution to the evening by answering (or talking about) one of the following questions: “What is the greatest lesson you’ve learned in the Family?” or “How did you get together with your husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend?” or “Tell us an ‘old-time’ story” (which for FGAs could be about how they met the Family, and for SGAs could be something outstanding about their childhood within the Family). The advantage of preparing is

that while everyone has plenty of these types of stories to tell, many people likely won’t talk about them unless it’s in such a setting where “everyone’s doing it” and they can feel comfortable. Giving people advance notice helps tremendously.

Anecdote

In the corner of a workshop lay a large pile of tiles, glass, and stone. One day, after studying the pile of material, the workshop owner came up with a plan: He would use the pieces to create a mosaic masterpiece. *But some of these pieces are too bright and lively patterned*, he mused. *They will certainly spoil my design.*

The man carefully sorted out the pieces that seemed too peculiar, odd, or unflattering for what he had in mind. In time he had created a pile of materials he deemed suitable for the mosaic—unobtrusive shades of gray and brown. With excitement he set about placing the different pieces into his mosaic pattern.

After several days’ work he was disappointed to see that the mosaic lacked vibrancy. He had envisioned a dynamic masterpiece, but the duller shades had eliminated contrast and animation.

His eyes were drawn to the pile of bright tiles and glass, as the sun’s rays reflected off them and they glimmered brilliantly. “Aha! It is color and variety that I am lacking!” the man exclaimed. “I must incorporate brightness, variety, and pattern to bring this mosaic to life.”

Carefully the man rearranged the tiles, making places for the patterned tiles, and placing the colored pieces where they would enhance his creation. At last the masterpiece was complete—the modest hues mellowed the vivid reds and blues, and the intense colors added vibrancy to the subtle-toned tiles. In its completion the mosaic was a mixture of vivacity

yet calm beauty; it was balanced yet varied to perfection. It truly was a masterpiece!

Hot Key: Diversity

159. (Jesus:) Call on the key of diversity and you'll have what is needed to introduce variety into your Home to help you form a strong winning team, whether it's providing the winning combination through your team members or a variety in your Home goals and projects so that all members are challenged. The key of diversity will also provide you with ideas to keep your Home spiritually stirred up and cultivating your spiritual gifts. When you call on the key of diversity, you'll have a balanced mixture in your team, ministries, plans, and goals, which will help you to meet the needs of each member on your team and reach your vision as a Home.

Prayer Boost

160. (Prayer:) We praise You, dear Husband, for the variety You've blessed us with in life. We know You must love variety, because there's so much of it in the world and in Heaven. When we look at Your creation and the infinite variety in Your designs, as well as think about the heavenly realm and the awesome variety of things there will be to discover there, and the spirit helpers we can access today, it makes us so thankful. There's never a dull moment with You, because You always have something new for us to learn or discover.

161. Thank You that through having variety in our Home, we can be a more well-rounded and better team for you. If we were all the same, if there were no differences,

how boring life would be! So we praise You for Your wisdom in creating so much variety in personalities, because the uniqueness of each person makes life interesting; it makes our Home a fun place to be, a happy place to be. Thank You, Jesus, for helping us to blend together well for Your glory.

162. Help us to appreciate the differences in one another, and even grow to like the differences, because of the diversity they create. Help us to see things as You see them, Jesus. And if there's anything that we can do to make our Home more balanced, or anything we could do to add more variety—either in the way we do things, or by taking in new personnel, or anything else—please show us. We call on the key of diversity to aid us.

163. Above all, Jesus, we need Your help.

We need the variety of Your Spirit. Keep us stirred up. Keep us alive. Keep us from getting stuck in ruts or set in our ways. Keep us as Your revolutionary brides who are desirous of the new, the different, the

unique—even the crazy and the wacky. Help us to be Don Quixotes for You, and to respect and appreciate others' crazy faith and ideas and preferences and ways of doing things as well.

164. We praise You, Jesus, that we can be one in You. Even though we're all different, and come from different backgrounds, and have different histories, and grew up in different places, we're still one body, Your Bride. Thank You that even though we're male and female, younger and older, and have so many other differences that are too numerous to name, You help us to work together in harmony. Thank You for making us a winning team, and for continuing to strengthen us for the future.

Lack of variety is like living life in black and white instead of color.