

Leadership Lessons, Part 2

Unrealistic expectations, and how to avoid overextending yourself

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Messages from the Lord and excerpts of lessons shared with the COs by Mama and Peter at Summit 2001—By Maria Maria #601 CM/FM 3385 4/01

Dearest Family,

IN this GN I'll share with you some of the messages that the Lord gave for the COs at Summit 2001, and some of the lessons that Peter and I shared with them, about unrealistic expectations and how to avoid overextending themselves. The Lord showed us to publish them because they apply to each and every Family member in some way. Granted, not every sentence or example will fit your situation, but please benefit from them as much as you can.

2. The Lord has shown us that things are not going to get any less busy! After all, we're in the era of action, the era of greater works, and with the current vision of expanding to meet the needs of the many sheep the Lord is bringing and will bring to our folds, each of you will probably find your lives becoming increasingly busy with that added responsibility. Shepherding brings a new dimension to life—your time is no longer your own, and someone always needs you! So, even if you don't think you need these lessons now, you'll probably need them in the future. These are very important principles which affect not only your happiness and fruitfulness for the Lord, but also the example that you set for your flock, which in turn affects their personal happiness and future fruitfulness, and the cycle continues.

3. Each one of you is precious to us. We need and depend on you, so please pace yourselves. Do what the Lord shows you to do, and then leave the rest to the Lord. Take the time to ask the Lord the various questions I asked the COs to pray about (at the end of this GN). Take the time to receive that special personal shepherding in your

own life, and I think you'll find it will make a great difference to your personal happiness and fruitfulness overall. I love you!

4. I thought you might wonder about the seeming contradiction between what the Lord is saying here and what He said earlier to the COs in the keynote ultimatum, where He strongly corrects them for their lack of faithfulness to take time with Him and operating in the arm of the flesh. (See ML #3347, GN 941.) Here He is commending them for all they've done and all the progress they've made, and tells them not to worry about the lacks and the shortcomings. We asked the Lord to explain that.

The Lord Sees the Good!

5. (Jesus speaking:) All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. I know that you're not perfect. There are times when parents have to deal with their children, correct them, even discipline them, and then forgive them and go on. But that doesn't take away from the great love they feel for their children, and even the sense of pride in their growth and learning. In fact, when the children take the correction well and determine to go on, the parents are even more proud of them, because they know

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that those lessons are a fact of life, a necessary part of their growth, and that if the children truly learn and progress, it's a valuable step forward.

6. Of course, there is sometimes damage to repair even after the lesson has been learned. There are habits to change, and in the case of your leadership, there is a need to set the record straight and rectify the sample. But still, that doesn't take away from the love I feel for them, or how proud I am of them for all that they have done, all that they have learned, and the way they took the lesson to heart so humbly and determined to keep going and do better. Yes, there is a very big and important area to progress in—the area of being faithful to take time with Me, changing their habits and mindsets to let Me work, and allowing Me to speak to them more clearly through being desperate and faithful to ask. But the way for them to learn that lesson is not to beat themselves up about it, but to humbly acknowledge their need and then make the effort to change.

7. I knew that they needed and also deserved this encouragement. And so do you, My children. Even though you have areas to grow in, that doesn't make Me less proud as a parent of all the areas that you are doing well in. Even the areas that you have lacks in, if you are working toward progress, if you are making the effort, if you are asking for My help, I'm proud of you in those areas too!

8. More than anything else, I see the good. I dwell on the good. I have to correct you sometimes, but that's as a compassionate Father, a loving Husband, a protective and concerned big Brother who wants to see you do even better. But it never takes away from My love for you. It never takes away from the admiration and thankfulness I feel for you, for all that you are doing, for all that you are making progress in, for all that you've given to Me.

9. So remember that. Even when I cor-

rect you and to you it is the whole picture, it's overwhelming—and often it should be, because it should make you desperate to change and do better—still, there are many other areas in which I'm very proud of you, and that I want to commend you for. And even the areas you lack in, if you then determine to do better, I'm proud of you for those, too. I never want you to worry about your mistakes or lacks—I just want you to do better in them! Always remember that. I see the good. I bless and honor you for the areas you do well in. I don't forget them just because I have to scold you sometimes. Even when I scold you, I'm hoping you'll get right back up and fight for victories in those areas as well, so that I can be proud of you for that, too! I love you! (*End of message from Jesus.*)

10. (Mama:) Now, on to the messages the Lord gave for the COs at Summit 2001, and some of the lessons that Peter and I shared with them.



Be Filled with My Joy!

(*Jesus sings:*)

11. I'm bubbling, I'm bubbling,
I'm bubbling in My soul!
I'm singing, I'm laughing,
I have to make it told!
I'm so very happy,
You cannot keep Me quiet!
I'm bubbling, bubbling, bubbling,
bubbling, bubbling deep inside!

12. Ha, ha, ha! You're probably wondering why I would include this little adaptation of a simple childlike chorus in a leadership meeting. Well, I'll tell you why ... it's because I'm very serious about how I feel about you, and that little song expresses it very well. I'm bubbling deep inside because I'm so happy, pleased, proud, delighted, glad, in love with, thrilled, inspired and excited about you and all you've done

and how you've grown, My wonderful brides, that I just can't keep it quiet! It's bubbling right up inside, and I just had to sing it out!

13. Another reason I sang that song is—and this is very important for you, so listen up—I want to set you at ease right from the start. I don't want you to be fearful or remorseful. I don't want you to be nervous. I don't want you to be thinking about your failures. I don't want you to be feeling you have to do everything just right. I don't want you to be fretting or fearing failure. I don't want you to be feeling disappointed in yourself or your performance. I don't want you to feel guilty because you haven't lived up to your unrealistic expectations. I don't want you to feel like you have to push yourselves so hard. I don't want you to be looking at your lacks, because I'm not. I want to wipe all that away from the beginning so that you can have peace, knowing all is well.

14. I want you to put that all aside now, and I want you to be filled with My joy, and that will be your strength. I want you to be convinced of My love, and of Mama and Peter's love for you. I want you to believe they understand your problems as I do, and love and pray for you. I am very proud of you, as are Mama and Peter. We've seen how you've grown and progressed, and we want to tell you how happy we are with you. We understand your limitations and the difficulties you face with your Home situations, lack of support staff, your many children, physical afflictions, and the list goes on. You have all those battles to fight and more. We understand, so there's nothing to worry about.

15. I want to take away your feelings of inferiority and your feelings that you haven't achieved all you think has been expected of you. Sometimes your expectations are unrealistic and cause you to overextend yourselves, and then you feel guilty that you didn't make the grade. I want to wipe all those negative feelings away. In My

book you've made the grade over and over again! I want to wipe away these fears and worries and give you peace.

16. You're all just at the place I want you to be. You've grown and are growing and will continue to grow. Mama and Peter are proud of you too. No one is in trouble; you've all done a monumental job. There may be a few tweaks here and there that need to be taken care of, but it's nothing to fear. All is well. All is going according to My plan, so take on My joy.

17. As the scripture says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength!" And so it shall be unto you. If you believe that and claim it, I promise that My joy will be your strength. You can hold on to that promise. That can be your motto from this day forth, because if you have fear and worry, that's debilitating, and you won't benefit from [what I bring into your life and want to give you]. Any nervousness, fear, or worry quenches the flow of My Spirit in your lives and dampens your personal happiness. So relax. Trust Me, and trust Mama and Peter. We love you and we want to make your job easier.

18. Now, let My joy bubble up in you! Let it be your strength! Rejoice in your victories. Rejoice in the battles. Rejoice in the blessings. Rejoice in the triumphs. Rejoice in the changes. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice! Stop looking at all your shortcomings and seeming defeats. Serving Me is supposed to be joyous! I know it's not always fun, and there's a lot of pain and suffering along the way, but there should always be a joy bubbling in your heart.

19. Remember, My joy is your strength. That joy comes from Me and My Spirit, not all your good works—although I am pleased with your works. I know your sacrifices and I'm pleased with them too, but nothing pleases Me more than your love for Me and others.

20. Remember that all the goals and objectives I put before you are just that—

goals. They're something to keep you going and moving forward, to stretch your faith. But the thing that is most important is your love for Me and others.

21. (*Jesus speaking:*) These goals I'm speaking of here are all the things that I've asked of you, that I've put before you and told you to shoot for. Now, besides those goals, there are some things that I've told you cannot be neglected. The first and foremost of these is your time with Me. So please don't brush that off as a goal which is nice to shoot for, but that I don't expect you to hit. In the case of your time with Me, it is something sacred. I do expect it of you and I know that it is possible, because I will make a way if you ask Me to do so. (*End of message from Jesus.*)

22. These things have I spoken and sung to you, that My joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full. So let your joy bubble up! Don't refrain; go ahead and sing it!

23. I'm bubbling, I'm bubbling,
I'm bubbling in my soul!
I'm singing and laughing
Since Jesus made me whole!
Folks don't understand it,
I can't keep it quiet,
It's bubbling, bubbling, bubbling,
bubbling, bubbling deep inside!

24. How's that for an icebreaker and bottle breaker? I love you, My precious brides. Any seeming defeats or lacks will all be resolved in My good time, but now is not the time to be dwelling on them. Now is the time to fill your hearts with joy and to know that I am well pleased, and Mama and Peter are too! (*End of message from Jesus.*)

25. (*Mama:*) Does that help? Does that make you happy? Are you going to follow the counsel? It's nice to hear the Lord's instruction, but you've got to make it part of you and do it, or you're not going to get the results. Like the Lord said, if you do it, if you grab hold of it and say, "I'm going to claim it, I'm going to do it. Lord, I want You to do it for me," then He will. But if you just say, "Oh, that sounds nice, that's great, but it won't work for me," then it won't work for you! It's all by faith—faith in the Word, faith in His promises. And when the Lord says, "Don't dwell on it," He means that.

26. We're not canceling out what we told you about asking the Lord to give you a list of things to ask for prayer for and areas you can grow in. (See "Changing Deeply Ingrained Habits and Mind-sets," ML #3324:19–24, GN 929.) But don't dwell on it negatively and allow those things to pull you down. Look forward in faith to getting prayer. The Lord's going to do it! He's going to do what you're asking Him to do, so you don't have to worry about these things, your lacks. Just write them all down and ask the Lord to help you start over now.

Unrealistic Expectations

27. (*Dad speaking:*) My, oh my! Isn't this just like the Enemy to place this ploy of unrealistic expectations—the playmate of discouragement—upon your shoulders, dear ones! If you could see from my vantage point how greatly loved you are, how greatly used you are, and how much you shine with the Lord's success, you would never again worry, or fear, or be tempted to feel you're in some way failing to meet the grade, or failing the Lord, Mama and Peter, or the flock.

28. Now, when I talk about you shin-

ing with the Lord's success here, I'm not talking about being perfect and being something or somebody who attains in every single goal or area of your spiritual life and ministry, because no one does. The Lord's idea of success is what? It's all in the simple verse, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." That's the Lord's idea of success—being faithful in the calling and ministry He's given you to do. And that's why you all shine so brightly—because you've all been found faithful in the high calling you've been given. You've held on and you've remained true to your calling—many of you for years and years. You've given your hearts and lives in love, dedication, loyalty, and service to your Husband, king and queen, and nation, so you're all shining successes!

29. Even if you feel you haven't grown much over the last year and haven't reached some goal to your personal satisfaction, or you're battling with your own lacks or human limitations—don't worry about it, because no one expects you to be perfect, and that's not what's important!

30. For one thing, even if you may think you haven't grown much, I can guarantee you have! Anybody who has faithfully held on and remained true and loyal to the Lord, the Word, and His cause over the last year or so has grown, even if you don't see any outward manifestations or signs of it yourself.

31. What is important is that all of you have fought, and held on, and continue to hold on! You've remained faithful and true! We're proud of you—each of you! What you've accomplished in simply remaining true to your calling and ministry is monumental! In some cases you've had major obstacles and hurdles to overcome. You've had a lack of personnel and support staff; you've had afflictions to battle with; you've had difficult situations in your Homes to contend with; and on top of it, you've had

your own sets of personal battles and difficulties.

32. So believe me, no one is pointing the finger at you and condemning you or judging you! Far from it! To the contrary, we all applaud you, and I know Mama and Peter certainly applaud you, as they know what you're up against every day. They have only the utmost love, respect, appreciation and admiration for you. Yes, they depend on you, they lean on you, but that doesn't mean they place unrealistic expectations upon you, or expect more of you than is humanly possible. In fact, I've seen their amazement at what you're able to accomplish and get done considering the hurdles you face every day. We're all amazed at your perseverance, your stamina, and your steadfastness in getting through each day despite these things.

33. So if any one of you is falling under the cloud of unrealistic expectations, let this talk lay that device of the Enemy to rest. Unrealistic expectations hinder you from experiencing the liberating freedom of being yourself, of trusting in the Lord's unconditional love enough that you have the freedom to relax and be yourself and let the Lord work through you. False expectation is constantly waving the whip over your head, making you feel you have to push and drive yourself more and more—do more, be more, attain, attain, attain!

34. That's the Enemy's whip, because his end goal is to wear you down and cause you to buckle under this false and debilitating weight, which unfortunately many place on their shoulders of their own accord through self-imposed expectations. Granted, it often stems from the pure motive of wanting to please the Lord and be all that the Lord wants you to be, but allowing yourself to fall into the trap of trying to attain through carrying the boulder of false expectations up the mountain will kill you! Eventually you'll collapse under the cumbersome weight; you'll fold and burn out.

35. You have the guarantee of the Lord's unconditional love, and He doesn't place any rock of unrealistic expectations on His Bride's shoulders as she climbs the mountain. In fact, His love is so wonderful, so complete, so beyond human comprehension that He will pick her up in His arms and tenderly carry her up the mountain Himself if need be.

36. So don't let the Enemy use this device of false expectations against you, okay? You have to fight this, because it stops you from fully resting in the Lord. It destroys your happiness, your peace, and your rest of heart and mind. Without this weight, you have true freedom, and when you have this peace, this rest, then the Spirit can fall upon you more completely, more fully. You become like that

little diamond of dust that sparkles and shines with His light! You're not struggling or trying to be anything more than what He helps you to be by His grace. You're set free to love Him just as you are, and then He in turn is set free to more fully work and shine through you! It works both ways.

37. And like the second part of the verse, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"—when you have that peace and trust and faith, knowing that you're pleasing the Lord simply through loving Him and remaining faithful and true to Him, then that true, full joy enters you which the Lord is talking about here. You can relax and have the true freedom and joy of His Spirit! (*End of message from Dad.*)

Jewels from Mama and Peter

38. (Peter:) The curse of unrealistic expectations is very real, isn't it? I would guess probably everybody struggles with it at some time or another, or often, or every day. The feeling of, "I'm not getting enough done," or "I'm not loving the Lord enough," or "I'm not being loving enough to people; I should be out there doing more." As Dad said, it really takes away from the freedom of the spirit and it causes you not to be yourself.

39. I was talking with somebody the other day and said, "Look, you're just you." The Lord loves you. He loves that you love Him, and He loves that you serve Him, and He loves that you do things for Him and others. But the main reason He loves you is because you're His creation. He made you the way you are and He loves you just the way you are."

40. Of course we want to progress, we want to do better, we want to love Him more and be more attuned to Him and all of those things—and that's good. But we have to remember that He doesn't love us because we work so hard. He loves us sim-

ply because He loves us, and He made you the way you are.



41. (Peter:) When you're in a position of responsibility you have to realize that sometimes you need a break. You can't always be there all the time for every person and every situation. If you feel that you should be or that you have to, you're going to constantly be pushing and trying to answer every question, answer every e-mail, fix everything, and you'll burn out, because it's just impossible to do it. You're not expected to do it.

42. The other day someone said to me, "Well, I just shut off my computer and I didn't look at it all day." He was saying it as though that was really bad—like, "I was really failing because I shut my computer off and I didn't look at any of my phone messages. I didn't answer anybody's problems for a whole 24 hours." I thought, "You probably ought to do that more often!"

43. As leaders, we get to where we have

so much coming at us constantly—people's problems, phone messages, etc. On one hand, e-mail has been a super blessing; on the other hand, it's a curse. Remember when we didn't have e-mail, when we wrote letters and mailed them? Someone wrote you with a problem, so by the time you heard about the problem it was already about a month old. And by the time he got some sort of answer back, it was another month, and you can be pretty sure the Lord took care of it in the meantime.

44. But now it's like, "Wow, we've got to do it now, we've got to do it today!" Then there's that condemnation of, "We're not answering fast enough." Or, "My God, someone had a problem today and we didn't get them the answer today." Of course we want to help the Family all we can, as quickly as we can. But can't we also trust the Lord in some of these things and not condemn ourselves for being inefficient?

45. We need to slow it down. We need to not feel that we can answer everything and do everything, because those are really unrealistic expectations. To think that you're going to have the solutions, or that you can comfort every person—it's impossible. Each person has to learn to get comfort and answers from the Lord for themselves. We actually hinder the Lord in some ways when we try to get in there and do so much, achieve so much, and hurry so much. The motivation is pure. It's not like anybody is trying to do this because they want to show everybody how they have all the answers. It's motivated by love. But it's unrealistic to think you can do that.

46. Even the Lord had to get away; He couldn't do it all the time either. So turn it off sometimes and don't worry about it. Don't turn it off and then worry about how you're failing! You can't do it all! No one can! Commit it to the Lord, ask Him what's most important to do, and then trust the rest to Him in prayer!



47. (Mama:) We're not meant to do it all. Peter pointed out that it's unrealistic to think that we can answer everybody. That's one unrealistic expectation. Each of you need to find out what unrealistic expectations you have in your life. There are things that may be unrealistic, or they may not be. Maybe the Lord wants you to do one thing but leave others undone. Maybe you have unrealistic expectations in one area of your life, but the Lord does expect more of you in another area.

48. So you each need to check yourself. Pray and ask the Lord: "Where am I raising my expectations too high or thinking that You are expecting too much of me? What do I think You expect of me, and what am I actually expecting of myself and imposing on myself?" You need to ask the Lord about it. Otherwise, how are you going to know what you're supposed to attain to and what you're not?

49. So ask the Lord! Don't delay. Do it today. Find out, so you can work on getting rid of the weights that are causing you all this worry and concern and inability to trust and relax in the Lord.



50. (Peter:) When you're asking the Lord about your unrealistic expectations, you could also ask Him what He thinks about areas that you feel you're a failure in. The Lord wants us to be humble. He doesn't want us going around saying, "Wow, we're so great; we do so good. I'm doing such a great job," because that's not healthy in the spirit. But on the other hand, He doesn't want us to walk around feeling like complete failures.

51. Some of the things the Lord tells us to do are goals—they're something to shoot for, to aim for. He doesn't expect that we're going to hit those 100% all the time. "Ask Me Everything" is like "Pray without

ceasing.” How many of you, all day long, pray without ceasing? If you take that literally as “pray without ceasing,” then we’re all super failures. But I’m sure the Lord didn’t put that in the Bible to make every Christian feel like a total failure in their spiritual life because they sometimes think of something other than a prayer.

52. You can’t have unrealistic expectations for yourself. You have to realize that sometimes these things the Lord gives us are goals and standards, to get us to reach and grow that way. But just because we don’t hit it and go beyond it doesn’t mean that we’re totally failing.

53. We could be walking around all the time feeling like, “I’m a total failure in my spiritual life because I don’t pray without ceasing, I don’t ask the Lord about every single thing.” But when you compare it to where you were maybe two years ago, you’re praying and hearing from the Lord and asking the Lord things a gazillion times more than you used to. That’s huge progress! Like the Lord said, everyone’s progressed. We want to keep going and moving forward, but sometimes we need to look back and say, “Look how far we’ve come,” and make it relative to where we’ve been, not to where we still have to go.

54. The key is that you’ve got to ask the Lord about things. He can show you if you’re truly not loving enough, or truly not spiritual enough, and then you can really work on those things. But if you would think about the areas that you believe you’re failing in or have failed in or really aren’t doing well in, and ask the Lord for His perspective on them, He would be able to give you a more true perspective of where you’re at. It would help lift that cloud, and also give you a clearer vision of what you really should be working on, without being distracted by the Enemy’s condemnation hanging over every area of your life.



55. (Mama:) Just remember the quote that sums up this lesson: “The Lord doesn’t look at how far you have to go; He looks at how far you’ve come.” So why are you looking at it any differently than the Lord looks at it? Why do we do that when we know that the Lord loves us unconditionally? We should pray to get our thinking in line with the way the Lord looks at things, and we’ll feel a lot less guilty, a lot less remorseful, and a lot less like failures if we believe what the Lord tells us.

56. That’s the crux of the matter—believing what the Lord said. Faith comes from the Word, reading the Word, believing it—fighting to believe it. When the Enemy is coming in with his lies, you’ve got to really fight to believe the Lord; it doesn’t just come naturally. Sometimes it’s a real fight, but if you choose to believe it, then your thinking becomes the Lord’s thinking, and then you don’t have these problems anymore. It’s a fight sometimes, but it is possible.



57. (Peter:) It’s like what Dad said about fear in the Letter “Attack!” (ML #171). He said you’ve got to face your fears and see which ones are real and which ones are just of the Enemy, and then you can deal with the real fears. It’s the same thing with our failures. Stop and think about it. What are the things that really discourage you long-term about yourself or the things that you haven’t done? Ask the Lord about those things, because they might simply be unrealistic expectations. If you’re not reaching those self-imposed goals, it makes you feel as though you failed; but maybe the Lord isn’t asking you to do all those things.

58. Take it a step further. If the Lord isn’t asking you to do all these things, and you’re trying to do them, then maybe He’s not even going to give you the grace to do them because He doesn’t really want you to do them. He knows it’s too much for you to do. So you need to get ahold of the Lord

about your feelings of failure and the things that discourage you, and ask Him, “In what areas of my life am I expecting too much of myself?” Or, “In what areas am I allowing other people to expect too much of me?”

59. If you can sort that out, then you can have the freedom just to be yourself, and you can let the Lord work through you to the limit that He wants to work through you. If you’re not trying to do all these things that He’s not really asking you to do, but that you’re asking yourself to do or you’re letting other people ask you to do, then you’ll just be working on achieving the realistic expectations that the Lord has. His bar of those expectations might be quite a bit lower. There might not be so many things that He asks of you, because He understands your weaknesses and He makes room for them.



60. (Peter:) We don’t look at you as failures. I mean, you might have to receive some correction from time to time, and you might need “tweaking” in a few things, but we admire you so much because we understand that it’s really difficult to be a CO, or a VS, or to be on a Home teamwork. It’s really difficult just to be in the Family, because you’re not only living your life and strug-

gling with the regular obstacles of life, but you’ve got the Enemy fighting you all the time. There are things to overcome and lessons to learn, and it’s not easy. It’s a huge undertaking, a huge job that you do, and we’re so thankful.



61. (Mama:) Here’s what you’re supposed to do: Just do the best you can each day. Commit to the Lord what you can’t get done, and if you’re doing your best, going to the Word and seeking the Lord for His counsel and guidance and then obeying what you read or hear, you’re doing all you can. As Jesus said of the woman of old, “She hath done what she could” (Mk.14:8). Do what you can, and that’s all you can do. Pretty simple, isn’t it?



62. (Peter:) Please accept the commendation and love from the Lord. Read it over again and take those words as truth, because that’s how He feels about you. Maybe you don’t feel that way about yourself, and you still have some of that failure hang-over, but He doesn’t look at it that way and neither do we. We admire you and we need you, and the Lord really needs you too.

What Does It Mean To Be “Overextended”?

63. (Mama:) We asked the Lord, “Is operating in the arm of the flesh and overextending yourself the same thing? If not, what’s the difference?”

64. (Jesus speaking:) Operating in the arm of the flesh is a symptom of self-righteousness. You think that you can do it without Me, or mostly on your own with very little help from Me. Not very many people think that consciously, but it’s the natural state of man to be independent and to drift away from the ways of My Spirit. It’s a super-

natural thing when you can overcome that and learn to operate more in the spirit. So it’s a constant fight for My children, to continually remind themselves that I’m the One Who has to do the work. And when you are in that frame of mind and are desperate with Me, you won’t overextend yourself.

65. In that way you could say that overextending yourself is part of operating in the arm of the flesh. Not everyone who operates in the arm of the flesh overextends themselves—some are very good at pacing themselves and delegating to others, but they’re still working in the flesh rather than

the spirit. But overextending yourself is always a sign of operating in the flesh, because you're not depending on Me enough. You're thinking that you have to do it all, or do more than I expect of you. You're not in tune with Me; you're not casting the load on Me. I want to help My children realize more clearly how dangerous it is when they overextend themselves. It's a direct symptom of self-righteousness and operating in the arm of the flesh.

66. Even when you're doing it with good motives—just trying to help someone, or fill the needs you see in front of you—if you're overextending yourself to the point that it cuts into your time with Me or your rest time, the “down time” that I made you to need, then yes, it is a symptom of self-righteousness and operating in the arm of the flesh. It's usually not that you consciously think that you're being so good and can do without Me, but it's the inborn nature of man to try to do things on his own.

67. It takes a supernatural miracle, and desperation, to know that you can't do it yourself, that you really need Me in everything. And when you are remembering this and putting Me first, you won't overextend yourself. You will be seeking Me, and you will be stopping for breaks and time to refill with Me. And with the very rare exception that you miss your regular quiet time that day, you will have come to Me about it, and I will have given you special permission, because I know that it's a very important part of your day and that you'll make up for it. That's the difference.

68. When you push to get so much done—even when you're pushing with good motives and intentions, and sincerely laying down your life for your brethren and trying to help My work get done—it's still operating in the arm of the flesh, because you think that you can somehow do it by pushing yourself, instead of obeying My laws of the spirit and taking your time with

Me, and getting the rest that I know you need.

69. Does that make sense? Can you understand what I'm saying? I'm not condemning you for this—I know that by and large it's your noble motives that make you push yourself to the point of being overextended. It's the old principle of the harvest being always plenteous and the laborers being few. But you still need Me, the Lord of the harvest, to do the miracles that you can't do, and even to coordinate the labor that you can do. You still need your food and water of the spirit to be able to keep going. And when you try to do without it, when you overextend yourself, it's a symptom of going in the flesh rather than in the spirit. (*End of message from Jesus.*)

Are You Overextended?

70. (Question:) How can you recognize when you've overextended yourself and are operating in the arm of the flesh?

(*Jesus speaking:*)

71. • Do you feel stressed, strained, or worried?

72. • Do the problems or troubles of those in your area [or your Home] burden your heart and keep you up at night thinking about them?

73. • Do you find yourself constantly tired and lacking inspiration?

74. • Do you feel that taking quiet time to relax and catch up on needed rest is time wasted, or at least time that could be better spent in something else or in your work?

75. • Do you worry about whether people will understand or be critical of you when you take time off, put your “do not disturb” sign out, or take time with Me?

76. • Do you put Me first every morning, or do you jump right into the day, feeling that you have so much to do and accomplish that you can't take sufficient time for Word and prayer, or feeling that if you spend time in the Word, it's going to cut

into your work time and you won't be able to get as much done that day?

77. • Do you spend time loving Me intimately each day, or do you allow it to be crowded out of your thoughts by a multitude of business and other things?

78. • Do you praise Me consistently throughout the day, or are you overly burdened and worried? Is your first reaction a praise, or do you feel burdened instead, as if each new straw could be the one that broke the camel's back?

79. • Do you feel like your work and life are overwhelming, and that you have no time to yourself, or no time to get ahold of your life?

80. • Is your marriage/relationship suffering because you're too busy to take time with your mate, loved ones or children?

81. • When someone asks you for counsel or a question, do you take it upon yourself to solve their problem in person, or do you take it to Me in prayer and have faith that I can speak to them, or that I can give you something that you can pass on to them from Me?

82. • Is your daily Word time an irrevocable time of communion with Me? Or does it sometimes get shortened or missed altogether?

83. • Do you regularly let united devotions or time spent sharing the Word with someone else take the place of quality personal feeding from Me?

84. • If something unexpected comes up during the day, do you write off your time with Me, your get-out, your quiet time or other personal time, figuring that the unexpected event "took its place," and therefore you'll have to skip one of those things?

85. • Is it difficult for you to take daily time with Me? When you do, does your mind continue to race and be filled with thoughts of the day and all that there is to do?

86. • Do you find yourself making excuses about why you're not able to get everything done, or apologizing to others for not getting to this or that, assuring them that you will just as soon as possible? Then do you try to do double-duty in areas that you've fallen down in, even though that means cutting out our time together, or missing out on something else vital to your happiness and health?

87. • Do you skimp on your body's personal needs—get-out, fresh air, relaxation, sufficient sleep, dietary needs, enjoyment and entertainment, because you feel you have too much work to do, so you can't take time for those things?

88. • Do you often feel like you have to do everything yourself, and that you can't delegate because you can't trust others to do the job; or feel that if others do the job, it won't be done right, so you prefer to do it all yourself?

89. If these points sound like you, then you are overextended, dear one. They are symptoms. They can sometimes be symptoms of something else—for example, unyieldedness, or pride, or lack of time in the bed of love with Me. But they are often symptoms of overextending yourself, which is in essence operating in the arm of the flesh. Check yourself, and ask Me, are you giving too much, pushing too hard? If so, you need to reassess your life and service for Me. It's not My will that you crack up and fall apart under the strain. I want to make things easy for you, to lighten your load and help carry your burdens. Of course, the load will always be there, your labor for Me, and it will seem heavy to some extent, as there is so much to do and you carry so much responsibility, but I will make it light. I will make it easy and able to be borne.

90. So much stress is wrong, and even though you have good intentions, they won't safeguard you or keep you from burn-out and eventual destruction of your spiri-

tual and physical strength and stamina. So please realize that for the most part, almost without exception, if you're under constant stress, you're taking on too much and not letting enough of Me in. Just accept that by faith, and then let Me help you and begin to change your life.

91. Each of you should pray to see what your personal danger signs are. This is an area that you need to be aware of and diligently fight against, for working in the arm of the flesh by overextending yourself can totally destroy your usefulness to Me. I have given you so much in the way of instruction and knowledge in how to use the ways of the spirit, how to operate in the spirit, how to use the gifts of the spirit and the new weapons to accomplish My purpose there on Earth. So when you neglect these things in favor of pushing in your own strength, your fruitfulness is much less, in some cases almost none, compared to what I could do or would like to do with that situation. I can only fully use those who are humble and yielded to My Spirit. I can only fully use those who realize that they have no strength of their own, and that if they try to do things in the arm of the flesh they will fail. I can only fully use those who lean and depend completely on Me. *(End of message from Jesus.)*

92. (Mama:) If those questions described you, please take the time to ask the Lord what needs to be adjusted in your life. For each of you, because your personal situations vary, the Lord's counsel will probably be different. But He loves you and needs you, and doesn't want you to burn out, so I guarantee that He'll have some workable solutions for you!

93. Please take the time to ask Him for them. This counsel won't do you any good unless you follow through on it, and the first step to following through is to ask the Lord what needs to change. Then counsel with your mate, your Home, or your co-

workers so that together you can make the necessary adjustments or changes. If you think it's not possible, that there's nothing that can possibly give in your schedule or that can be left undone on your to-do list, please ask the Lord! He'll show you. He does have a solution!

The Job Is Too Big for You!

94. The Lord explains clearly in this next prophecy that the minute we think we have to accomplish everything that our job entails, we're overextending ourselves—because the job is and will always be too big for us! The mistake is in thinking that we have to do it. Of course, there are things we have to do, but the way to know what we have to do and what we should take to the Lord in prayer and leave at that, is to ask Him.

95. (Jesus speaking:) This has been the struggle from the very beginning: flesh versus spirit. This was the choice that Cain and Abel faced, the cause of the controversy between them, and this same struggle between flesh and spirit continues to this very day.

96. The reason the Enemy fights so hard is because he knows that this is a way that he can easily get in. It's already man's natural tendency to be strong and to lean on his own strength and logic, and seeing that you are in bodies of flesh, it's hard for many to differentiate between strength of flesh and strength of spirit.

97. I have blessed many of you with a strong mind and intellect, and when you're yielded to My Spirit, then I can use your natural strengths to help accomplish My will. I've given many of you gifts in the natural—organizational talents and abilities, as well as drive and initiative—and when coupled with My Spirit, you can be powerful and useful tools in My hand.

98. But you must let My Spirit have full sway. Pray without ceasing, always look-

ing to Me and letting Me lead and guide you in everything you say and do. If not, if you go ahead and do things in your own strength and wisdom, then I can't fully bless you. You will have complications, difficulties, things will take much longer than you expected, and you'll find yourself becoming discouraged, tired, and lacking in My Spirit and strength.

99. I can't bless you and help you as much as I would like if you're running around and doing things in the arm of the flesh, outside of My protection and blessing. You have to spend time with Me. You have to be in constant communication with Me and let My Spirit empower and anoint you. Your job is too big and the responsibility is too great to even think that you can do things on your own, and if and when you try, you are automatically overextended. It all comes down to the wrong mindset of thinking you have to do it. You don't have to do it; I have to do it! But because there's so much work to be done, it's hard for some to realize when they're starting to cross over and do things in the arm of the flesh by over-extending themselves, rather than relying on Me and My timetable, My direction, and My Spirit.

100. How many times have I shown you and told you that by spending time with Me, I will help your work to progress even more quickly, and give you the solutions and answers? When you're taking your time with Me faithfully, I'm able to help you keep things in perspective, and you're not as easily pressured and tempted to overextend yourself. I'm also able to bring the solutions through prayer, much quicker than you could ever bring them about, if you could bring them about at all. I will do the work for you if you'll let Me. So if you really want to accomplish a lot and make a lot of progress and avoid the pit of overextending yourself, the secret is to take the necessary time with Me. The dynamics of the spirit are such that you can accomplish much, much more

if you spend time with Me.

101. Delegating is another secret to success. It's manifesting faith in My plan and in others, and it keeps your self-righteousness in check so you won't be as tempted to try to do it all yourself, and thus over-extend yourself. You can't do it all. You must learn to trust that I am in control and that it's My work and I will do it. The answer here is simple: You need to come to Me in prayer and ask Me. Ask Me if you should be doing this, or if you should delegate it to others, and I'll show you what to do. If I tell you to delegate it to others, then you can give them some advice and instruction, but then pray and commit it to Me and trust that they'll take care of it. They may not do it exactly the way you would do it, as each person has a different style; but if they're prayerful, then I will anoint them to do it and it will be taken care of.

102. I am the very source of strength and inspiration, and when you partake of My Spirit, then you are partakers of My unlimited supply.

103. I have need of you, My loves, so give yourselves totally to Me so that I can anoint you and use you as My vessels. (*End of message from Jesus.*)



104. (*Jesus speaking:*) At times it's hard for My brides to trust Me for all that there is to do. In their great love for Me, they often try too hard in their own strength to do the work of the spirit. For the most part their motives are pure, as they sincerely desire to be a blessing and to tend diligently to the affairs of the Kingdom. They want to do a good job for Me. They want to take care of the sheep and the many details that come across their plate.

105. The one thing that they must realize is that except the Lord build the city, they that build it do so in vain. It's better to do a little with My Spirit than much in the arm of the flesh; it's quality and not

quantity. These precious ones must realize that their time with Me in the Word and the bed of love is as important as their physical rest and eating to strengthen their bodies. Just as you need to have the right amount of food and rest in the physical, so do you in the spiritual.

106. There's always more to do than can possibly be done in any given day, but I ask you again, is it better to do a few things well, or many things in a half-baked fashion? The answer is obvious.

107. At times My brides might have to skimp some on their Word time or prayer time in unusual circumstances, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. If they feel that they don't have the time to be with Me, if they feel that tending to the affairs of the Kingdom is more important than spending their time with Me, then this is a sure sign that they're starting to over-extend themselves, losing a sense of their priorities, and are beginning to operate in the flesh.

108. When they lose the joys of living for Me and being able to enjoy the simple things of life—a walk, a talk, a moment of fellowship with one of their precious mates—this too can be a sign of overdoing. If they start to feel that their jobs and responsibilities are more of a chore and a burden than a joy, then this too can be a sign that they're taking too much upon themselves and not truly casting their burdens and cares on Me.

109. People should enjoy their jobs. They should like the place of service that I've chosen for them. I know at times the things that I ask My precious brides to do are not always their first choice, but as they yield to Me and truly trust in Me and give their lives and hearts to Me, I give them the grace and the joy that comes from giving all to Me. They are then able to have peace and satisfaction in what I've asked them to do.

110. In order to do their best for Me, they must take the time that they need with Me. So much depends on these precious

ones, and I need them to be in tune with Me and abiding in My Spirit. Shepherds need to be the well-oiled gears of the intricate machinery of My Family of the End-time. They need to be as the jewels upon which the movements of the clock hinge. They need to be in place and well-oiled and honed in the proper fashion to fit their place of service, so that the other parts of the mechanism can move freely and with a minimum of friction.

111. You ask why My brides tend to work so hard in their own strength? In their sincere desire to be faithful stewards of what I have entrusted into their care, they start to think that they have to do it, that they're the ones who are responsible for all these affairs of the Kingdom. Well, in some ways they're right—they are responsible—but how they handle that responsibility is the key to success or failure.

112. Do they let that responsibility drive them to Me in a greater degree of desperation than ever before? Does it cause them to seek Me more diligently than in the past? Does it help them to be convinced of their total inability to do anything in the proper fashion without My Spirit? Are they convinced anew of their need for Me and My help in every way, or do they think that their anointing will carry them through?

113. While I do give an anointing with many gifts and talents to My precious brides, this anointing is a living thing that must be fed and nourished by My Spirit Look at it like this: The anointing is your basic package or program that you're given to fulfill any given task, but these basics need to be enhanced and updated as time goes on to accommodate the changing needs of any calling or ministry. You need to log on and download the latest version with all its enhancements so that your anointing won't just do the basic job, but will do it in an outstanding fashion, and will be able to adapt to the changing demands of any job or challenge.

114. At times, My brides try to ride along for too long on their basic anointing without getting the latest upgrades. The problem is that as time goes on, the demands of the calling and ministry can change, and without the latest upgrades, My brides won't be able to function properly and in the most efficient fashion.

115. With so much to do, it can be easy to lose sight of the proper way to go about things. It can be easy to feel that others are expecting a certain level of performance from them. They need to forget any preconceived ideas of what or who they are and what they need to be for Me. They need to realize that they're nothing without My Spirit, and to strive first and foremost to be what I want them to be—not what they feel they need to be for the sample's sake or for the standard's sake. They want to be good samples of loving shepherds who are diligent with all that they do, but they must not set an artificial standard of what they consider to be right or appropriate. They need to seek Me in humility and desperation so that they will be what I want them to be—a sample of My love and power.

116. At times My precious brides take too much upon themselves out of pride, as they want to prove to others that they can do it, that they have their act together. Well, I don't have a problem with anyone having their act together, but it's important that it's My act and not their own. Other times they need to have more faith to trust that I can anoint others to do the jobs that need to be done. The goal is not to load down a few people with more than they can possibly do, but rather to spread out the responsibilities on more shoulders in order to raise up others who can diligently care for the affairs of the Kingdom.

117. I know that it seems that there are never enough people to give more responsibility to, but sometimes it's a matter of having the faith and trust to give a job to someone else and to take the time and

have the patience to train them. It takes faith to trust that others are going to get desperate and seek Me. It takes effort and time to pray for others that they will learn whatever lessons I have for them. It takes patience and faith to take the time to instruct and teach those in your care. (*End of message from Jesus.*)

Homework

118. (Mama:) If you're a Charter member and you want to do your best for the Lord, please don't neglect to ask the Lord these questions. We've gone to all the trouble to work on these GNs for you and have invested a lot of time and prayer and labor in them, and I believe the Lord wants to see His Words bear the greatest fruit possible. Please don't just read them and stick them on the shelf, but let them change your life! And the way they're going to be able to do that is if you ask the Lord these questions and find out these things for yourself, personally, and then work on putting them into practice. I love you!

■ **Questions to ask the Lord for more personal shepherding _____**

1) What are my unrealistic expectations? What are the things that I really should be doing, and what are the things that I think I should be doing, which I'm just imposing on myself?

2) In what areas of my life am I expecting too much of myself? Or in what areas am I allowing other people to expect too much of me?

3) What are the things that discourage me long-term about myself or things that I haven't done? Please speak to me about these feelings of failure regarding (fill in specifics). Please give me Your perspective on them.

4) What are my personal danger signs that show I'm operating in the arm of the flesh or overextending myself?