

ALL OF US HAVE REMEMBRANCES OF THINGS THAT PEOPLE HAVE DONE TO US THAT HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED US. But what if we all used those things as an excuse for all of our problems for the rest of our lives? Some people do, but other people who have been just as wrongly mistreated, at some point take the blame & responsibility for their problems & therefore are able to get the victory over them. The Lord wants us to take the responsibility on ourselves, because He wants to show His power & His deliverance, that no matter what has happened to us in the past, it doesn't have to affect our whole lives! We don't have to carry that load with us for the rest of our lives. Like the verse says, "Every man shall give an account of himself unto God." (Rom.14:12) The Lord wants us to forgive those people & ask Him for His deliverance from those problems, so we can overcome them & continue on for the Lord.

WE ALL HAVE HAD LOTS OF TERRIBLE THINGS TO BLAME OUR PARENTS FOR, legitimate things that they were to blame for. They were the reasons why a lot of us were in such a mess, but when the Lord got ahold of us & saved us, He forgave us for all that we had done wrong & He expected us to forgive others, including our parents & whoever else had done wrong to us. (Eph.4:32) He made us new creatures in Christ, & all that they had done to us or against us in the past no longer had that power over us. The Lord delivered us, so there isn't any reason why we have to continue to blame our parents or others for all the problems in our lives. In fact, we have no right to. We are commanded to forgive them, & that means we can no longer blame them. Perhaps they were responsible

initially, but it's no longer their fault, now it's our fault if our problems that resulted from their misuse of us continue, because the Lord has given us the power to overcome those things.

THE SAME IS TRUE WITH CONTINUING TO HOLD LEADERSHIP OR ANYONE ELSE TO BLAME FOR YOUR PROBLEMS. Certainly some leaders were to blame for things that may have happened to you, but at the same time, you yourselves usually had some choice in the matter. In the instances where you didn't have a choice, now that Faithy & Paul have been there & have apologised for all of the past mistakes of your leaders & have shown you that things are different now & have challenged you to another commitment for the Lord, now the Lord is making you responsible to go on in His service & to forgive those who hurt you & to take the responsibility for yourselves. He's shown you that there is deliverance, there is hope & that you can come back to the Family & be freed of all these problems, if you choose to. So now therefore you know the Truth & the Truth will set you free! (Jn.8:32)--But if you don't now accept the responsibility for your present problems & quit blaming them on others, you're just going to go through your entire life never getting the victory or making any progress, because you self-righteously blame other people for everything bad that happens to you.

THERE COMES A CERTAIN POINT, LIKE WHEN CHILDREN REACH THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY, where they understand what is right & wrong, & then they have to make a choice. At that point, the Lord makes them responsible for their actions.--And the same is true with you! Now that you've been shown the Truth & we've apologised, you have to make the choice whether you're going to forgive & come back to the Lord & get delivered from your problems.

BUT THERE IS A CONDITION TO YOUR GETTING DELIVERED & FORGIVEN FOR YOUR SINS: You've got to forgive those who offended & hurt you & not hold them to blame for all the problems you have from now on! The Lord really makes a lot of things contingent on forgiveness! If you are full of bitterness & cannot forgive others, then the Lord cannot forgive you or help you very much. The Word says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also

forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." (Mat.6:14,15) The Lord is able to help you forgive & help you get rid of your bitterness if you ask Him sincerely.

MAYBE IT WILL HELP YOU GET THE VICTORY OVER BITTERNESS MORE EASILY IF YOU FACE THE FACT THAT NO MATTER HOW SERIOUSLY YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRONGED, YOUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT ALL SOMEBODY ELSE'S FAULT, THEY'RE PARTLY YOUR FAULT! So God's rule is, when you forgive others for what they did to you, then He can forgive you for what you've done to Him & what you've done to others. God's Law is that you have to forgive first & then He'll forgive you.

BUT I DON'T THINK ANYBODY THAT CONTINUES TO BLAME OTHER PEOPLE FOR THEIR PROBLEMS IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO GET THE VICTORY or is going to be able to progress & grow spiritually! You've got to take the responsibility yourself! You've got to confess your part in the wrongdoing (All have sinned--including you!) so that the Lord can heal you & deliver you & forgive you, because it says "if we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins." (1Jn.1:9) But if we don't confess our sins, if we don't even think it's our fault, how can the Lord forgive us?

IF YOU'RE HONEST WITH YOURSELF, YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE AT LEAST PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT WENT WRONG, & YOU NEED TO BE FORGIVEN FOR IT, & THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO REALISE. Once you decide to start serving the Lord fulltime, & to go to the mission field, you've got to get rid of this heavy burden of bitterness & blame that you are carrying yourself & also putting on other people for your problems; otherwise, you won't be able to do a good job for the Lord. So that's got to be a requirement, that you stop blaming other people & start taking the responsibility yourselves! Before you rejoin you need to know what is expected of you: That you are responsible for what you do from now on, & that there is no more blaming others for your failures & problems.

FOR YOU TEENS WHO ARE GOING TO THE TEEN CAMP, this will be the point where you will have to stop blaming your parents for taking you out of the Family or for not giving you good training or whatever they were to blame for. You have to take the responsibility yourselves for your lives from now on!

Your parents won't be to blame for the future. This is the point where you're having to make the decision. You're growing up spiritually, you're going to be faced with the decision to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, & the Lord will go largely by your faith & what you want to do now; it's going to be between you & the Lord now. It's like before your parents were responsible for you, but now at this Teen Camp (or with the TTC Handbook) you are going to become responsible yourselves.

WHEN YOU WERE WITH YOUR PARENTS YOU HAD TO DO WHAT YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU TO DO, whether it was right or wrong, so you weren't responsible. When your parents backslid out of the Family, you teens, who were just children then, had to go with them. But now that you're teenagers at the Teen Camp you're going to have the responsibility between yourselves & the Lord, because you're going to be faced with the Word about what is right & what is wrong & you will have to make the decision yourselves. You can't lean on your parents because it's no longer your parents' responsibility to make the decision, your parents have relinquished that, God bless them! In letting you teens go, they have allowed you to stand before the Lord on your own, so now it is up to you kids & you can no longer blame your parents for holding you back or for anything they've done to you.

(PETER: IT'S LIKE WITH SALVATION, MAYBE YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO GET SAVED, YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU COULD GET SAVED, but when you heard the truth about Salvation, then it was your personal point of decision between you & the Lord, & you then had to decide. You could either forsake the old & go on with the new & be submitted to the Lord or you could reject it & just go on doing your own thing, but from that point on you were responsible. That's how it is with you backsliders, you've seen the truth. The Family may have made its mistakes but it's still your place of service & what the Lord called you to, & you know it & you're faced with it & now you have to decide. You're responsible from that point on, just like the sinner is responsible once he hears the Message because then he knows the truth.)

I THINK A KEY POINT IN ALL OF THIS, AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, IS THAT YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE IF YOU EXPECT TO BE FORGIVEN! Obviously it's partly your fault, no matter how bad your lead-

ership was to you! There are a lot of others who stuck it out in the Family & kept on for the Lord who had just as bad leadership & were treated just as badly & just as harshly & severely as you, so how do you explain the difference? The Lord was able & He could have kept you going too, so it's your fault if you didn't avail yourselves of His ability to keep you going.

YOU HAVE TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY YOURSELVES, BECAUSE IF YOU BLAME OTHERS OR GOD OR ANY OUTSIDE INFLUENCES "BEYOND YOUR CONTROL", THEN YOU ARE SAYING THAT ALL THINGS ARE NOT POSSIBLE WITH GOD & that your case was too hard for the Lord & He couldn't keep you because the leadership was too bad to you & made too many mistakes & were too mean to you, & you just couldn't make it. That means that the Lord wasn't able & He didn't have the power to keep you, & we know that's not true! You could have kept on for the Lord, so therefore you cannot blame other people for your going back on the Lord.

YOU HAVE TO STOP BLAMING OTHERS FOR YOUR PROBLEMS & ACCEPT THE FACT THAT ULTIMATELY YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE! You were partially responsible before, but you're even more responsible now! A lot of you won't like to hear this because you did get treated very badly & you want to blame your problems & backslidings on those leaders, but I've got to tell you that you must forgive, that's the first step, & you've got to see that ultimately, in the final analysis, when it came down to the crunch, those leaders did not make you backslide, because God is greater than that & God was able to keep you no matter how horrible things got! If you had wanted to keep on badly enough for Him, & if you had held on to the Lord, you would have made it, just like a lot of others did. If you had really been living for the Lord & doing what you were doing to the glory of God, then you would have stuck no matter what anybody else did to you!

I'M VERY SORRY FOR YOU & I'M VERY SORRY FOR HOW BADLY YOU WERE TREATED, IN SOME CASES IT WAS HORRIFIC! It's a real stain on a lot of our leadership & my heart goes out to you who were treated so badly. But no matter how bad I feel for you, I can't just put the blame on somebody else for your backsliding! That applies to all of us in every area, we can't blame somebody else for our problems. The Lord allows

people to test us a lot of times & do things to us that cause us problems because He is testing us to see what we're made of & how close we're going to stay to Him, how tightly we're going to cling to Him. He wants to see if any of these things will move us, & if our house is built on the Rock, Jesus Christ, & not on other people or leaders or circumstances.

I THINK WHEN MOST OF US JOINED THE FAMILY WE CONSIDERED THAT WE HAD TAKEN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN LIVES & LEFT OUR PARENTS. Now we were responsible, so from then on whether we had leaders or not, we still were ultimately responsible before the Lord because we had the Word. In other words, we had a direct link with the Lord, with the Source, so we knew the Truth. Even if some of these bad leaders got in our way we still can't blame them for our leaving the Lord & His Work & His Word because we had the Truth & it was all there & we knew what to do, so it was our responsibility. And even more so now that we know what we're supposed to do, & we don't even have so many big leaders any more telling us what to do, so we won't in any way be able to blame it on our leadership now. Now the decision is totally up to us & we have no one to blame for our problems but ourselves

OF COURSE WE HAVE SOME PEOPLE WHO WILL SAY, "YEAH, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE!--I WAS EXCOMMUNICATED!" There are going to be some people who are going to protest that they were excommunicated unjustly & falsely & that they were charged with things that weren't really so & that they would have stuck it out & stayed in the Family if they hadn't been excommunicated. Well, I think most of those people, if they're really honest with themselves, will realise that they probably deserved & needed it! If they weren't excommunicated for actual legally excommunicable offences, at least their hearts & their spirits were in bad enough shape that they probably deserved it.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE DON'T EXCOMMUNICATE PEOPLE FOR BECAUSE THEY ARE DIFFICULT TO PROVE & TO PIN DOWN, BUT NEVERTHELESS, IN THE LORD'S SIGHT, THEY ARE PRETTY BAD OFFENCES. We only have a little list of a few things that are actual listed offences that we excommunicate people for, but the Lord knows who is in the kind of situation & state & shape that they don't really deserve to be in the Family & who

haven't held that honour & privilege dear & who haven't appreciated their blessings. They've grumbled & murmured & complained, at least in their hearts, & held bitterness towards people, so whether under our rules they really should have been excommunicated or not, most of them probably know that in the Lord's sight it was quite legitimate & justifiable.

THERE ARE A FEW RARE CASES WHERE PEOPLE WERE UNJUSTLY EXCOMMUNICATED. Maybe it was a misunderstanding, maybe it was because of somebody's false report who was jealous of them, or for a variety of other reasons, but I don't think there have been very many truly good, on-fire 100%ers that got excommunicated, but I'm allowing for the possibility that there might have been a handful. But remember, in our Family we don't consider excommunication permanent! If people repent & bring forth fruits meet for repentance & show a sincere desire to get back on where they got off & live for the Lord in accordance with Family principles & rules, then we welcome them back! So if you had wanted desperately to get back into the Family, all you had to do was humble yourselves and repent and start showing that you had a sincere desire to live for the Lord & for the Family! We've reinstated hundreds of people! So that's no excuse!

MAYBE SOME OF THESE PEOPLE WERE FALSELY OR UNJUSTLY EXCOMMUNICATED BY FAMILY LEADERSHIP, but nevertheless, can we say that the Lord made a mistake or allowed a mistake to be made in the lives of His children whom He loves & is concerned about & who love Him? When the final crunch comes, if you're going to blame someone, you've got to blame it on the Lord, right? If we really believe & have the faith that the Lord is in control, then we've got to blame Him, right? Why are we in the Family or serving the Lord if we don't believe the Lord is in control & the Lord is doing the leading of this outfit? I mean, we might as well quit right now if we don't believe that!

THEREFORE, WE'VE GOT TO SAY THAT THE LORD DIDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE! Maybe the leadership did, but the Lord didn't, & if He allowed you to be excommunicated He did it for a reason. And because we believe that the Lord never allows anything in the lives of His children except that which is for your

good, to teach you lessons that you couldn't learn any other way, perhaps to humble you or to draw you closer to Him, or to expose your sins, then we know He didn't make a mistake. There are lots of reasons why the Lord allows things that look like they're bad in our lives, but He does it always for our good! If we don't believe that, we're in the wrong outfit! You've got to see the Lord's hand in it, you need to learn your lessons from those things & then come back & serve the Lord in a much better, more dedicated & sacrificial way than ever before.

SO EVEN THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN EXCOMMUNICATED CAN'T USE THAT AS AN EXCUSE for saying you weren't allowed to serve the Lord in the Family & that excommunication made you backslide. Regardless of situations, or what kind of place you were in or in what kind of Home or country or government, there is no justification for not serving the Lord! You could have continued serving the Lord, you didn't have to backslide! You could have rejoined the Family & been reinstated, & been true to the Lord & served Him even though officially out of the Family & without the Letters. You still had the Lord, didn't you? We don't even make a certain length of time for excommunication; whenever you've shown that you've had a genuine change & you've gotten victories & you are progressing & you are desirous of living 100% for the Family again, we let you rejoin!

PEOPLE THAT GOT EXCOMMUNICATED & WEREN'T POUNDING ON OUR DOOR EVERY MONTH ASKING TO GET BACK IN make me wonder if they didn't deserve to be excommunicated in the first place! We only want people in this army who are true-hearted, whole-hearted, absolutely 100% dedicated & who want to serve the Lord & this Family more than anything else in the World, or anywhere else in the World! Some of these people that have said, "Well, we got excommunicated years ago. Nobody ever came around & told us we could come back to the Family."--To me that sounds like a big excuse. (Peter: It sounds like they thought that the Family was wrong & they were self-righteously thinking the Family made the mistake so the Family should come to them instead of them wanting to get back on for the Lord.)

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WEREN'T WILLING TO FORGIVE, IF THEY

WERE JUST SITTING THERE WAITING FOR THE FAMILY TO COME KNOCK ON THEIR DOOR. Like you say, I think that probably means that, "I didn't feel I was to blame and I felt the Family was to blame and I was too proud to make the first overture. I wanted the Family to come and apologise to me first before I would deign to rejoin, or, I was just using that as an excuse. I didn't really want to live the hard, rigorous, sacrificial, dedicated life of a Christian revolutionary, and this was a very convenient excuse: That I got kicked out, so I couldn't be in the Family anyway."

I HATE TO HURT YOU PEOPLE'S FEELINGS THAT WE'VE JUST WELCOMED BACK INTO THE FAMILY AGAIN, BUT I THINK THAT'S THE TRUTH! Some of you were using that as an excuse, because we would have welcomed you back with open arms if you had repented & been willing to conform to the principles & rules of the Family. And whether or not you think the principles & rules are unjust or whatever, that's our Family, & if you want to be in the Family, I guess you will have to go along with a few imperfections & mistakes & problems.

LIKE ONE DEAR BROTHER WHO JUST REJOINED SAID, "The Family at its very worst is better than the System at its very best!" We've heard quite a few testimonies along that same line from some of these people who left us years ago & have had to go through Hell before finally coming back to the Father's house humbled & desperate to get back to doing something worthwhile for the Lord!--And you are the kind of people we want to come back, you who want to forsake the past & who want to go on wholeheartedly for the Lord today!

ARE YOU BLAMING YOUR PROBLEMS ON OTHERS? Have you forgiven those who have hurt you in the past, or are you using that as an excuse for your own failures & backslidings? Remember, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." (Rom.14:12) You are responsible for your own actions! So forgive those who have trespassed against you so the Lord can forgive you for your trespasses! "Forget the things which are behind & reach forth unto the things which are before, & press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" (Phil.3:13,14) "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new!" (2Cor.5:17)--Are you?