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- *Compassionate giving and appropriate receiving*
- *Welcome the challenge of imbalance, and seek guides' help*

There is a great light that envelops each of you individually and as a group. God's presence is particularly evident. It provides for your needs. It provides a sense of the perspective you all seek, a recognition of what life is to teach you. We rejoice in the brilliance of this life that you are experiencing, for your lives hold within them an enormous potential for benefit directed toward others.

You are all aware of your own individual concerns that have direct impact on your lives, and that is fine. But you are also capable of doing much that is directed outward. Perhaps it is best not to lead you to believe that you should be doing more, but merely to emphasize that you all have the potential and ability and strength to persevere toward those goals that are beyond your immediate needs. Those needs are real. Those individual needs, although immediate, are important—they're not frivolous. They are, in their way, consequential. So you need not shy away from those needs, but recognize that in those immediate needs are the seeds for a broader involvement that reaches beyond your present situation.

There is a limit for each of you in terms of time and energy—physical energy, emotional energy. You all have limits beyond which you cannot go. You certainly should embrace those limits, accept them, and recognize that for every individual those limits will differ. But it is also important to recognize that those limits are fluid. The limits that you had last year are not the same as you will have next year, and they are not the same as your current limits.

When the demands for your love, the demands for your compassion are close at hand, that is where they should be. Compassion is the same whether it is exercised in the home or beyond in a broader arena. Compassion is a reaching outward. Compassion is a direct reflection of godly love. But the demands that seem immediate will change and they will lessen, and you will be given insight to recognize a broader stage for your exercise of faith. Invariably, the immediate demands do return, at which time your exercise of faith returns to the immediate, returns to the close at hand, to the family member and close friend.

There are, of course, moments in your lives when *you* are what is in greatest need of support. It is a fact of God recognition to ask for support. It is the strong who ask for support, not the weak, for you must overcome pride, you must overcome a sense of invincibility, you must overcome a belief in your own powers—all must be overcome to ask for help. That is an act of strength, and when your needs become the most pressing, then you are reflecting God's existence, God's influence through your request for help. Such is the nature of human life built upon an awareness of God. You offer help, but you also are empowered to receive help.

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Too often you are reluctant to recognize that help is needed. One surrounds oneself with guilt or self-pity or anger or a feeling that one is being forgotten or ignored. Such feelings get in the way of the ability to ask for help.

Your lives, then, swing back and forth between helping and being helped. It is important to be a compassionate giver, but it is also essential to be a sensitive and appreciative receiver. Examine those parts of your lives that reflect personal needs, and ask yourself when those personal needs are really needs or merely wants or wishes. If they are indeed needs, then those needs must be fulfilled, for only in their fulfilling are you then enabled to reach out and enhance and affirm the life of another.

Recognize your needs for what they are. Those needs that are less than reflective of God can be cast away. They can be put aside, labeling them as selfishness or greed. But in the examination of those needs, you will recognize what is really important. Accept that recognition and be willing to respond to what you know is there.

Each of you is experiencing in some form or another a sense of loss. You have much to be joyous about, much for which you are being blessed, but the losses which you experience also must find a place in your lives and be accepted. Part of that acceptance comes from sharing those agonies with another, for in so doing you provide an opportunity for another to reach out. You are, in a sense, allowing yourself to be helped. Recognizing the loss, discussing it, is the most effective way of dealing with it and ultimately getting beyond it to the point where the loss has no impact, no impediment on your lives.

The absence of peace in a region of the world is not unlike the absence of health. You are only acutely aware of health when you are reminded of what it means not to be the beneficiary of that. You are aware of the benefits of peace when you are reminded of what it means not to have peace. You can be pulled down emotionally by the suffering of another who is ill or the suffering of a group of people through injustice, but such recognition has no beneficial effect if the result of that recognition is being discouraged or angered. That recognition should serve as a springboard that helps to focus the direction your lives are taking.

If someone else is denied help or freedom, one should ask oneself, "What does this mean for me in my life? What am I to do with that information, with that recognition? Is it best for me to be quietly accepting of that? Is it best for me to be present with another who is engaged in the suffering? Is it best for me to become actively involved in the alleviation of what it is that offers the affliction?" These questions lead to a godly response to what has been learned, to what has been perceived, to what has been observed.

When you experience illness personally, it is easy to move into a realm of self-pity or anger. Wouldn't it be more beneficial if you were moved to action to an effort to overcome what has transpired? If you are in pain, you are then moved to find ways of alleviating that pain, finding the cause, learning of the treatment. If you are grieved by

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the sufferings of others, that grief can serve as a rallying call to bring you to a constructive evaluation of what can be done and where you fit into that action. That is a more constructive response than being consumed by the grief itself.

When you love another, you are committed to enhancing and affirming another, whether it is through assistance in problems of health or political pressures or emotional difficulties. You are motivated to reach outward. It is in the expression of that motivation rather than in the experience of grief or frustration that you are acting in the presence of God. There is nothing wrong with grief. There is nothing wrong with anger over what may be transpiring. What is not right is the dominance of that anger, the dominance of that grief, the dominance of worry. Do not let these negative feelings control you. Experience them, certainly, for that is being human, but let them become a part of your response rather than the entirety of it.

It is easy to say "don't be down" when the going is rough, and quite something else to stand up and continue to move forward regardless of the difficulties encountered. But it is that effort to get up, that commitment to moving forward that strengthens you and binds you more closely to your awareness of God's presence.

We are here as your guides to provide a means of understanding what it entails to be active. It is we who teach you the importance of that activity. It is we who can teach you the fruitless response of self-pity and endless remorse and anger or jealousy. One has to learn to experience what works. Look at a person who is constantly angry and you will not see someone who is successful in their reflection of godly virtues. Look at someone who is consumed by self-pity and you will not see an individual reflecting God's energy in a positive way upon the world.

But look upon one who has gone through great difficulty and is still at the front of the line, doing what can be done for another. That is a life reflective of God. That is the goal that everyone should seek. Leadership in life means setting an example. It has nothing to do with power. It has nothing to do with transitory influence. It has nothing to do with political reality. It has everything to do with the exercise and manifestation of love as you come to understand its purposes and actions.

We see each of you developing your ability to be a strong reflection of God. It is not a constant reflection that you exercise, for that would not be human, but the reflection is there and there are many moments in your lives when you transcend the human capacity and embark upon a spiritual activity that reaches out and embraces, affirms and strengthens. Living a life guided by God you cannot exploit another, you cannot exploit others, you cannot elevate yourselves at the expense of anyone or anything. You affirm the equality of all. You affirm the value of every human being. You may not agree with all that is said by another, but you affirm that person's value.

The prayers that we have for the world are indeed for peace, but it is both individual peace and world peace. It is an inner peace that has a clear view outward. If you are filled with God's peace, you see God all around you. It is not a vision only

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toward what lies within. The strength is from within, but the vision is all around you. We pray for your vision in such a manner. We pray for a clear understanding of the relationship that challenges and suffering have to the overall development of the soul that can be achieved only in human form. If inequality and illness—Imbalance, we can call it—were unessential to your growth, then it would be necessary only to find the short cut to God and forget about the pain in the present. Welcome those moments, be they of short duration or long duration, when you are faced with the challenge of relating God's presence to the imbalance that you see around you. At times like those, turn to your guides, ask for vision, ask for perspective, ask for strength, and they will be given to you.

Our presence is for your benefit, it is for your growth as well as for our own. We only grow when you grow. We become stronger in our spiritual convictions as you become stronger in your spiritual convictions. We are really together. There is no separation between the life that we experience and the one that you experience. It is really the same life. It is a different perspective, but the life is indeed shared.

God's peace be your peace. God's vision becomes yours. God's strength becomes yours. And may God's love be yours as well.

Amen.