



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

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“And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight [that your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment], so that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value [recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral differences], and that you may be untainted and pure and unerring and blameless [so that with hearts sincere and certain and unsullied, you may approach] the day of Christ [not stumbling nor causing others to stumble].”

Philippians 1:9-10 AMPC

Dearly Beloved,

The word “love” has become so hackneyed (made trite and commonplace by overuse) in the last century that it is hard to apply it appropriately these days. Only those who have been privileged to experience love as an all-encompassing, ever growing, constantly endearing, and always delight-fully new bonding can try to explain the joy of living in love.

True love is a love that continues to grow in joy; it is a love that overshadows the weaknesses and transgressions that occasionally are revealed in the beloved one; it is a love which tenderly forgives, and quickly forgets. To be a recipient of this unqualified love humbles us and inspires us to love as we are loved.

We receive this kind of love from our Father God, and pray to receive it from our spouse, family, and closest friends. It is, however, the love that we humans can express only by the active grace of God working in our lives!

The Apostle John explains it so beautifully for us in 1 John 4:19: **“We love, because He first loved us.”** We have the ability to love as He loves us because He loved us enough to die for us so that we can live—and love—through Him.

Look at the definition of “love” listed under “theological” in the dictionary: “a) God’s benevolent—kindly—concern for mankind, and b) Man’s devout attachment to God.”
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Notice that in the above headline verses, the Apostle Paul does not just pray that we might have better discernment! He prays that our love would increase and deepen until it influences every thought and subsequent word and action!

He knew that if we received godly knowledge, insight, and discernment into a truly loving heart, we would not be drawn into heated arguments or the breaking of relationships over different practices or various viewpoints that have little to do with the tenets of Christianity that Jesus and His apostles taught with their words and demonstrated in their lives.

Our respect and affection for our brothers and sisters in the faith should enable us to listen to them kindly, discuss our differences with them freely and lovingly and honestly, continue in fellowship with them, and humbly learn from one another. Inviting others to approach the throne of grace and wisdom together with us, in love and prayer, tears down the walls of separation and judgment.

Paul's prayer is that our "devout attachment to God" will increase so that we would absorb all that God is revealing to us through the knowledge of His Spirit and His Word, and crowd out all that is superfluous or irrelevant to our position with the Lord in His Kingdom. As we come to know and love Jesus at a deeper relational level, our discernment will become more acute, so we can sense what is vital to His heart.

We shall then, by His grace, be enabled **"to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean"** (Leviticus 10:10), **"...to discern between good and evil"** (1 Kings 3:9 and Hebrews 5:14), and to **"...extract the precious from the worthless."** (Jeremiah 15:19)

As we are trained by the Holy Spirit to recognize **"the highest and the best,"** we shall be able to **"approve and prize what is excellent,"** and ignore the tawdry temptations to be drawn after unclean physical or emotional desires, the persuasions of man's ideas, traditions, or positions, or the beguiling attacks of the enemy.

Learning to **"distinguish the moral differences"** between what is being offered to us in increasingly appealing packages on television, in movies, and in music recordings, and that which is written for our instruction in the Scriptures about the pure and righteous behavior of Jesus, protects us from becoming tainted, defiled, blamable, and guilty.

We practice keeping our hearts in tune with His heart through His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, and by listening carefully to the loving words of correction from our Christian family and friends.

All of us yearn to have **"hearts that are sincere and certain and unsullied"** so that we would have no cause to dread the day of Christ's coming. None of us can bear the thought that we might stumble, or cause someone else to stumble, because we lack knowledge of God's ways and His "benevolent concern for mankind."

The good news is that we do not have to live in fear, "white-knuckling" our way along the highway of holiness, biting our fingernails in anxiety, stressing ourselves into a frazzle trying to perform to an unachievable standard of behavior. God is more interested in the motivation of our hearts than in the correctness of our doctrine, and His grace is sufficient for us!

Through the cross of Jesus, God offers us the way into His Kingdom and His perfecting. When we nail all of our self-will and indulgent desires to His cross, we declare that we recognize our sin and enable Him to transform our lives. We then enter into His rest, and yield to Him as His grace works in us to know and to do His will.

In His famous Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5:6, Jesus promised us: **"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."** If we refuse to sit at anyone else's spiritual or moral table but our Lord Jesus Christ's, we will always have a place set for us, we will always know His love, we will always feed on righteousness, and we will always love with His kind of love.

Beloved, we pray: **"May you abound in and be filled with the fruits of righteousness (of right standing with God and right doing) which come through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One), to the honor and praise of God [that His glory may be both manifested and recognized.]"** (Philippians 1:11 AMPC)

Lord Jesus, help me in my frustration with learning true love. I see Your model of perfect love, and I am humbled and in awe of it. I confess my love for You and for special people in my life, but I know how far short of Your love I fall even with them. But Lord Jesus, You are love, and You dwell in me! Please love through me until I can get it right, which I guess will be for ever and ever. But that's OK with me because at least I'll get in on it, and because I know that when You come, I will be like You in all things, even in the totality of Your love. Amen.

Huge (learning to really love) Hugs,

