



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

1 Monarch Trace Ct. #106, Chesterfield, MO 63017-4618 - Ph: 636-778-9361 - rcmin2@charter.net

Paul and Gretel Haglin

EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

April 2017

**For God has not given us a spirit of timidity,
but (a spirit) of power
and (a spirit of) love
and (a spirit of) discipline.”**
2 Timothy 1:7 NASB

Dearly Beloved,

God is again releasing His power in and through His Church. Scores of people are being healed from debilitating diseases and freed from demonic control when the Holy Spirit is welcomed into a gathering of the saints. Unbelievers are overwhelmed by the evidence of a living, loving, real, and formidable God.

The Holy Spirit is not timorous as some imagine, fragile and flighty and ready to flee at the least infraction of someone's tradition-prescribed behavior. When He manifests the presence of God in a place or a person, many of our preconceived concepts of Him are swept away! As we experience the presence of God, His power and love are displayed and Satan's kingdom is rolled back. But, please know this:

Power without love and discipline can be destructive and leads to pride.

Love without discipline and power lacks the conviction to speak and act in faith to set a captive free.

Discipline without the love and enabling power of the Holy Spirit leads to legalism.

The return of God's power being manifested in the Church sets God's people free from traditional bondages that quenched the liberty to fully worship Him.

The Holy Spirit is once again gracing us with an understanding of His true agape love. When He fills our lives, He brings an overwhelming ability to manifest the love of the Lord Jesus that melts and heals hardened and wounded hearts. This gift of compassionate and selfless love discloses that He is resident in us.

However, neither power nor love springs forth fully developed at the instant of our conversion. Rather, we spend our whole lives studying and practicing how to walk in the image of Jesus. As we persevere and begin to minister to others in His name, we see more power and more love being exhibited in our lives, and the spirit of discipline or self-control—restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires—becomes increasingly important.

Roger C. Palms articulates this for us in *The Pleasure of His Company*, (Tyndale House Publ., Wheaton, IL, 1982):

For too long most of us have thought that self-control was some form of punishment—a kind of masochism. That is not true! To indulge oneself of every whim

or fancy not only destroys the spirit but the body of a person, it destroys the sense of adventure and accomplishment we all experience when we are challenged to say “no” to ourselves. Self-control is probably one of the few frontiers that has never been fully conquered. For each of us it becomes an exciting challenge. I will never know what I can be with God until I try to live with Him and for Him. I need to know what I can resist, what I can do without, and what I can overcome. To work at this is as much of a challenge as climbing Mt. Everest or walking on the moon.

If we Christians want to challenge the jaded people of the world that yawn at our efforts to evangelize them, we shall have to strip down for action and begin to walk in all three of these characteristics—power, love, and discipline—that God has granted us through His Holy Spirit.

Many ancient writers listed the most important point last in a list of the points they were seeking to make. We believe this applies to our lead Scripture. This God-character walk starts with increased self-discipline.

Ask any successful athlete what the word “discipline” or “self-control” means to him. He will say anything that is not pointing toward the standard he has set for himself must be ignored or deliberately set aside. He will explain that his desire to achieve his goal is so great, be it a gold medal, or even just personal best satisfaction, that nothing in his life is too sacred not to be sacrificed for its achievement.

That kind of commitment and sharp focus is what Jesus was urging His listeners to embrace in Matthew 6:33 (AMPC): “...**seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.**”

A dedicated athlete is willing to hear and to practice what his coach tells him he must correct or adjust in his technique, attitude, training, or timing in order to win. He willingly submits himself to the coach’s discipline even as far as to what he eats, what he spends his leisure time doing, and how much sleep he should have. He spends hours poring over the coach’s manuals and videos, concentrating on learning all he can about his sport.

He carefully studies the moves and the lives of others who have achieved the goals that he has set and devotes himself to emulating their dedication and perseverance.

Thank God we Christians have the Holy Spirit as our divine coach. He patiently teaches us God’s ways. He enables us to resist the temptations to take shortcuts or to be discouraged by the size of the obstacles thrown into our path. We are also blessed to have the gift of 66 extraordinary books written through the centuries that are filled with examples of others who have finished the course—and even some of those who fell or failed.

We are blessed that throughout history there have always been righteous people who have chosen to turn from the world’s demanding expectations, to run the glorious race of righteousness. We need to hear about them, learn from their walk, and recognize that there are modern-day Christians, right in our own families, neighborhoods, schools, and churches who have also chosen to walk in God’s power, love, and discipline.

The Apostle Paul coached his disciples in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “**Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.**” and in Philippians 3:17, “**Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.**”

The question the Holy Spirit has been asking me with increased frequency these last years is this: “*Would a young Christian see an exemplary picture of a powerful, loving, disciplined saint by observing your day-to-day life? Is it imitable?*”

As I began to examine my life in the mirror of the Scriptures, and in comparison to the lives of other blessed believers I know, it didn't take me too long before I fell on my face and repented! He mercifully began to show me that *I can never attain to His power and His love until I am willing to submit to His discipline—in all areas of my life.*

He is calling all of us to a life totally under His Kingship, which means that we must be willing to drop our plans and projects to obey His divine directions, just as James and John did when they immediately left their father and their un-mended nets to follow Jesus. It takes discipline to ignore the strident voice of the urgent (their father needed their help, and those nets really needed mending), to answer God's call to be His servants in whatever field He has need of us.

God is quietly exposing my personal Achilles' heels (*small but mortal weaknesses*) to me during my quiet times with Him. This is no heavy-hand-of-God dealing, but a private word of counsel from a Father/Friend. It is the kind of intimate relational talk that washes my heart and mind with a cleansing cloth of love. Since each of us has our own unique soft spots, we cannot write a doctrine or build a church around a particular list of man's ideas of unholy "no-noes" or religious "go-goes." The Apostle Paul said it so succinctly in 1 Corinthians 6:12: **"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."**

Until we can learn to discipline our lives (grow the fruit of self-control), we will remain vulnerable to the rule of something or someone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and we cannot be fully trusted with His power, nor can we display His pure love.

You see, God, who knows us best and is aware what things or desires in our lives block us from totally coming under His divine rule and His blessed authority, is gently testing our courage to leave our "un-mended nets" (society-mandated obligations) behind and follow the love-flow of the Kingdom of God.

What is the "sticking point" in your life? Where do you run when you are hurt by and disappointed with the turn of events in your life? In some of us, our "sticking point" is simply a preoccupation with what we put in our mouths—food! The Holy Spirit challenged me on this, and He helped me shed 40 pounds almost effortlessly over a mere seven months. He backs up His disciplines with His power and love!

Out of His ranks of loving, powerful, and disciplined men and women, He will choose the core of His end-time army—an army whose goal is to attain to a level of godliness that delights our Lord: **"...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."** (1 Timothy 4:7b-8)

We all long to hear the Lord say to us, as the Apostle Paul wrote, **"...I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ."** (Colossians 2:5) Let us all check our habits of timidity and grow into all of the power, love, and discipline He has given us.

Hugs,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul & Janet". The script is cursive and fluid, with the ampersand being particularly stylized.