



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

## Letters of Faith

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**“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 once again releasing His power in and through His Church as scores of people are healed from debilitating diseases and freed from demonic control when the Holy Spirit is welcomed into the gatherings of the saints. When He manifests the presence of God in a place or in a person, our preconceived concepts of the Holy Spirit are often swept away, but as we experience His presence, we rejoice in knowing that we are going to see His power and glory displayed and Satan's kingdom rolled back.

With the return of God's power to the Church to set people free from bondages and give liberty to worship Him, the Holy Spirit has also graced us with a love for the unlovely. When the Holy Spirit 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 the truth that He is resident in us.

However, neither power nor love springs forth fully developed at the instant of our conversion. 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, despite the inevitable setbacks and ridicule, we see more power and more love being exhibited in our lives. That is where the third element of God's gifting lies: the spirit of discipline or self-control—restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires.

If we Christians want to challenge a jaded world that yawns at our efforts to evangelize, we shall have to begin to walk in all three of these gifts that God has granted us through the Holy Spirit.

We believe that this walk starts with self-discipline. Ask any successful athlete what the word “discipline” or “self-control” means to them. They would say that anything that is not pointing toward the standard they have set for themselves, anything that might divert or entangle them on their way to their prize, must be ignored or deliberately set aside as being counterproductive. They will also explain that their desire to achieve their goal is so great, that nothing in their lives 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 (AMP): **“...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 put into practice what his coach shows him he must correct or adjust in his technique, attitude, or timing in order to win. He willingly submits himself to the coach's discipline even as to what he eats, how he spends his leisure time, 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 lives of others who have achieved the goals that he desires and then devotes himself to emulating their dedication, perseverance, and sacrifice—and, hopefully, their success.

Thank God we Christians have a divine coach, the Holy Spirit. He patiently teaches us God's ways and endues us with the power to run the race victoriously. He enables us to resist the temptation to take shortcuts or 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—even those who fell short or failed.

The Apostle Paul coached his disciples in 1 Cor. 11:1 (NASB): **“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.”**

As we begin to examine our lives in the mirror of the Scriptures, and in comparison to the lives of other blessed believers, it won't take us long before we will fall on our faces and repent! He will mercifully show us that we can never attain to His power and His love until we are willing to submit to His discipline in all areas of our lives.

What He is calling all of us to is a life totally under His Lordship, 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 left their unmended nets to follow Jesus. It takes discipline to ignore the strident voice of the urgent (those nets really needed mending) and to obey God's call to be His servants in whatever field He has need of us.

It is important to note well that we need all three of these gifts! Discipline without the love and enabling power of the Holy Spirit, leads to legalism. Love without discipline and power lacks the conviction to speak and act in faith to set a captive free. Power without love and discipline is destructive and leads to pride.

God is quietly exposing our personal Achilles' heels (*small but mortal weaknesses*) to us during our quiet times alone with Him. This is no public, heavy-hand-of-God dealing, but a private word of counsel from a Friend, our personal coach. Since each of us has our own unique soft-spots, we must not write a doctrine or build a church around a particular list of man's unholy “no-nos” 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 and apply the fruit of self-control), we will remain vulnerable to the rule of something or someone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and we won't be trusted with the fullness of His power, nor can we display the full life-giving purity of His love. Please read that sentence again!

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

What is the sticking point in your life? Has the Lord said to you, as He did to Simon Peter in John 21:15, “**...do you love Me more than these?**” To Peter He was saying, “*See those fish? Are you willing to leave the security of a fisherman’s catch to join Me and believe that I will care for you for the rest of your life?*”

No, Beloved, there is nothing evil about fish or fishing—but the inordinate love of the catch had come between Peter and his total commitment to the Lord. As long as it had such a hold on his heart, Peter was vulnerable to answer its siren call. Even when the Lord had need of him, he had run back to it for solace, comfort, and a sense of safety after Jesus was crucified and he had failed Him.

Surely, other men could continue to fish and receive the Lord’s blessing, but the Lord was asking Peter if he could walk away from the excitement, income, and the identity of those nets once and for all. In discipline and love, Peter responded and then received the love and the power that characterized the rest of his life.

Jesus will choose His end-time army out of the ranks of loving, powerful, and disciplined men and women—an army whose goal is to attain to a level of godliness that delights Him as 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)

Don’t 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)

*Heavenly Father, I confess that the very word “discipline” makes me uncomfortable. I ask that You cleanse my mind and emotions of all the garbage and lies about discipline that I have picked up like burrs over the years. Let Your loving truth about discipline be seeded into my life instead. I submit to Your training and teaching. I put my trust in Your love, in Your power, and in Your discipline. Amen!*

Hugs,

