



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. 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. Unbelievers are overwhelmed by the evidence of a living, loving, 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 prescribed behavior. When He manifests the presence of God in a place or a person, many of our preconceived concepts of Him are often swept away! As we experience the presence of God, we see His power and love displayed and Satan's kingdom 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.

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 is once again gracing us with an understanding of His true agape love. 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. 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 masochism. That's not true! To indulge oneself of every whim or fancy not only destroys the spirit but 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's 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 a challenge as climbing Mt. Everest or walking on the moon.

If we Christians want to challenge a jaded world that yawns at our efforts to evangelize, 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 the 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 satisfaction, 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 (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 to 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, 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 desires and then devotes himself to emulating their dedication, perseverance, and sacrifice—and, hopefully, their success.

Thank God we Christians have the Holy Spirit as a 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 Cor. 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, “*Is your life imitable? Would a young Christian see an exemplary picture of a powerful, loving, disciplined saint by observing your day-to-day life?*”

As I began to examine my life in the mirror of the Scriptures, and in comparison to the lives of other blessed believers, 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 unmended 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 alone with Him. This is no public heavy-hand-of-God dealing, but a private word of counsel

from a Friend. It is the kind of intimate relational talk that washes my heart and mind with the cleansing cloth of love. Since each of us has our own unique soft spot, we can't write a doctrine or build a church around a particular list of man's ideas of 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 the fruit of self-control), we will remain vulnerable to the rule of something or someone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and we can't 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 "unmended 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 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. He challenged me on this and He helped me shed 50 pounds almost effortlessly over the past 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 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,

