



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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*Paul and Gretel Haglin*

EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

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## Letters of Faith

January 2016

**Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.  
Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart;  
and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.**

Matthew 11:28-30 NSAB

Dearly Beloved,

At the beginning of each year, most of us take time to contemplate our life and formulate plans of action for the year to come. Typically we sit down with our new calendar and begin to fill in the little day squares. First the non-negotiable priorities, those times that have already been promised like holidays, vacations, anniversaries, birthdays, date-nights with our spouse, and Bible Study or prayer group meetings, etc. Then we add the new times we've "resolved" on January 1<sup>st</sup> to set apart this year to improve ourselves, like begin to exercise, to take a course, write or paint or practice our music.

Of course our jobs and/or schools demand huge blocks of time as well, and it is frightening to see how full our calendars become even before the year has started. The monthly grids on the white pages of our calendars have taken on the look of an acute case of chicken pox. There is hardly a space to write down a new telephone number or another name! "There, now," we congratulate ourselves, "I shall be worth my salt this year."

Beloved, be alerted that it is much easier to use the marvelous electronic means of establishing a schedule than it is to actually implement it, especially any new parts.

We Christians have always been inclined to feel guilty about saying "no" to a request for help or to "do something special for the Lord." Once we have consented to "do" something in our church or for a cause, it seems to become like the law of the Medes and the Persians that can never be changed—we have signed on for life or until Jesus Christ returns!

God has His reasons and God has His seasons. For us to determinedly plow on the same course come "hell or high water" year after year without checking with the Lord, is sweating vainly, building with wood, hay, and straw. (Ref. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

We feel torn between urgent demands and the everyday obligations of life because we haven't yet begun to fully grasp or to live in the truth of Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus lived thirty-three years in a human body with all its emotions, demands, and frailties. He knows our frame better than any of us do. This exhortation of Jesus is both a wonderful invitation to us who will listen, and a promise of the gift of "rest for our souls" as we allow Him to guide us. He proclaimed this to us because He knew we needed to hear it and to heed it.

No one has had a greater call upon his or her life than Jesus, yet He had time to actually dialogue with women (unheard for a Rabbi of His day), go on picnics, and hug little children. He had time to teach and model the Kingdom of God to His disciples. He took time to have lunch with sinners and to listen to them and gently minister to them and inspire great changes in them. He had the courage and took the time to confront the hard hearts of the religious folks who wanted Him to adhere to their idea of a spiritually disciplined life.

Jesus certainly was not calling the people to a lazy, non-productive, or undisciplined life. He was calling them out of a crushing burden of trying to earn heavenly "Brownie-points" with God by their many religious do-dos. Instead, He was calling them into a life of productive trust and quiet rest in Him. In this state of being yoked with Him, we can accomplish much without the fear of failure. He becomes the

burden-bearer. He is teaching us not to take on more than He has assigned to us and not to strain against the yoke He has designed for us.

For example, He told us that we were not our sons' Savior! What a relief to finally understand that it is not our responsibility anymore to make sure that our adult sons are serving and growing in the Kingdom of God. That is the job of the Holy Spirit now. We led them in their youth to invite Jesus to be their Lord and we still pray for them and we model Jesus for them the very best we can! But now it is the Holy Spirit's job to bring our sons back to fellowship with their Heavenly Father. He may use us in some way we haven't tried yet, or He may use some total stranger anointed as a harvester for the Lord in this season, but we know He will do it because He has promised us He will. So we can rest and trust our sons to their loving Lord.

Chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel records Jesus summoning His disciples together to give them authority over unclean spirits and authority to heal **"...every kind of disease and every kind of sickness."** He sent them on a specific assignment to **"the lost sheep of the house of Israel"** with the commission to **"...Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons..."** He gave them definite instructions and warnings and a reminder, **"For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."** They resisted the temptation to go beyond their divine authority, assignment, and commission to the house of Israel and therefore experienced the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven operating here on earth.

As you seek the Lord's will for your life in this new year, we exhort you to start with a blank calendar. Then allow God to have His way with your time and energy. Permit Him to remind you of your family obligations as well as to call you to an assignment that you hadn't even considered before like driving the elderly, or cleaning the church. Surprise your pastor by volunteering to help before he has to ask someone!

If your children are entering a season where they need the stability of your presence in their lives on a more frequent basis, or your aging parents need your reassuring attention, give priority in your life's calendar for them and let some of your former "obligations" rest for a year or so.

Have the courage to ask to be relieved from a commitment that you no longer feel God's peace in doing. Lightning won't strike you! In fact you have a magnificent Scripture to undergird such a decision: **"My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, have given a pledge for a stranger, if you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth, do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. Do not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."** (Proverbs 6:1-5)

Then, after you have "cleared the decks for action" so to speak, and established the Holy Spirit priorities for your time, start to put in the necessary and urgent and the ordinary functions of a productive life.

Join us in our prayer to invite the Lord to establish the objectives of our days: *Father, I confess that I have been filling my calendar without adequately consulting You! I have heeded the voices of "needs" and traditions instead of Your Holy Spirit, and even sometimes looked for identity in my activities. Please forgive me! Grant me the courage to lay my schedule on Your altar for Your refining so that I might know and walk in Your easy yoke and Your light burden and find rest for my soul. Amen.*

Let this year be known as the year that you leapt from your works into His ways! I guarantee you will be delighted and you will be a delight to Him!

Hugs,



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