



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

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“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”
(2 Corinthians 11:3)

Dearly Beloved,

The deceiver of the brethren is in high gear in the world today—and in the Church as well.

The apostle Paul’s writings were filled with warnings of the deceiver at work within the newborn Body of Christ and with instructions and examples of what to do about it. He warned the Galatians (3:1) that they had been **“bewitched”** by the Judaizers who put their faith in the flesh instead of the Holy Spirit: **“So then, does He who provides you with the [Holy] Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”** (Gal. 3:5) And he certainly didn’t pull any punches when he addressed the almost unbelievable immorality in the Corinthian church: **“It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife.”** (1 Cor:5:1) Paul follows this shocking revelation with precise instructions of the “faith and tough love” approach to dealing with this situation.

When the Holy Spirit actually lifted the lead verse off the pages of my new Bible and smacked me in the heart with it almost 40 years ago, I was shocked to see the apostle Paul say that he feared something.

He didn’t fear being stoned in Lystra—when he was resurrected, he walked right back into town! (see Acts 14:8-22) He surely was not afraid to dress down the popular false magician in front of the Roman ruler in Paphos: **“But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, ‘You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.’ And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.”** (Acts 13:9-11) As a result of Paul’s bold and fearless confrontation of this deceiver, the proconsul sought the Lordship of Jesus.(vs.12)

But Paul declared he was afraid—afraid of deception working into the hearts of new believers!

The apostle Mark tells us that Jesus declared there will be deceivers in the last day’s church who will attempt to mislead (deceive) even the “leadership” away from the truth: **“And then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, He is there’; do not believe him; for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.”** (Mark 13:21-22) How very easy we all find it to let displays of power lead our minds and hearts away from **“...the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”**

Most of us have been carefully warned against the deceivers who Paul declared would come to destroy our theology—like faith in the second coming of our Lord Jesus: **“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy [falling away from the faith] comes first...”** (2 Thes. 2:3) I am afraid that most of us think about abhorrent theology, false teachings, and lying signs and wonders whenever we think of deception.

However, we want to declare to you right now that the enemy of our souls has launched a new attack on the Body of Christ using the *“deception of the false believer.”*

Yes, Beloved, the deception of the false believer—meaning, men and women active in the church who are pretending to be believers in the Lordship of Jesus and Holy Spirit-filled saints who are actually neither! By saying pretending, I am including those who really think they are believers, but who have not actually given their lives up to the Lordship of Jesus—those who intellectually profess Jesus as Lord, but have never experientially received Him and yielded to Him as King of their lives. I also include in this group those who are actually deceived by demonic spirits into thinking the spirit realm they are operating in is the Holy Spirit realm.

An obvious example for us to contemplate is that of Chris Coleman, the former personal security officer in Joyce Meyer's Ministry right here in St. Louis. This self-professed strong Christian believer, entrusted with protecting the very life of this high profile evangelist, and as such, trusted and welcomed into the highest circles of Christian leadership, is presently under arrest for killing his wife and two children. Can you imagine how deceived Joyce and her whole organization feel right now? Yet not one of the top charismatic leaders who had contact with him discerned his falseness. Or if they did, they failed to warn Joyce about him!

We are not just talking about a brother or a sister with wrong or fuzzy theology! We are talking about heathen impostors who are at least tools of the enemy, and are at worst servants of Satan like the magician at Paphos.

How dare we challenge another's salvation? Jesus told us how when He said: **“For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit.”** (Luke 6:43-44a) Paul further defines Holy Spirit fruit for us in his letter to the Galatians: **“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”** (Gal. 5:22-23)

The controversial ministry of Todd Bentley must be discerned by the “fruit test” if we are to be protected from making an unrighteous judgment or from being misled by lying signs and wonders as warned of by Paul in his second letter to the church in Thessalonica. **“...that lawless one will be revealed...that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”** (2 Thes. 2:8-10)

These are powerful words from a powerful and fearlessly discerning apostle!

Beloved, the repeated failure of the Church, including you and us, to confront false believers when the Holy Spirit gives us discernment of their falseness has resulted in the deep wounding of thousands of believers. We must stop being put off by scriptural clichés like “Don't touch God's anointed!” We are responsible for knowing what God, or god, is doing the anointing, and for responding scripturally when we discern the anointing is from a false god on a false believer.

Now please don't fall into the trap of becoming a watchdog for God, or becoming an accuser of the brethren! We are not saying that! But building on last month's Letters of Faith about relying on the presence of God as we walk with Jesus, we can, and we must, be alert to spot and disclose false believers before they can perpetrate their deception on any part of the Body of Christ.

If you doubt this admonition, I suggest you talk with someone who has experienced the shock of “deception of the false believer.” Someone perhaps like Joyce Meyer, or any member of her team.

Beloved, this is actually a life and death warning—physical as well as spiritual life and death!

It is a warning that is as old as the scriptures, yet as new as yesterday's headline news: **“These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”** (Jude 12-13)

Beloved, we must abide in God as He abides in us, and put our trust in His presence! Then we will not be deceived and we will be bold when we discern deceivers, for Jesus declared: **“Abide in Me, and**

I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

And the fruit we will bear will be Holy fruit of the Holy Spirit and it will release grace and peace: **“...having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”** (Phil. 1:11)

Hugs,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul & Gretel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PS: Thank you to all who are receiving this letter via e-mail or the web. Please let us know if your e-mail address changes; otherwise we might lose track of you!!