



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

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## Letters of Faith

**“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

Philippians 4:6-7

Dear Beloved,

Sometimes it is easy for us Christians to forget how dependent we are upon our God. Then suddenly we have a door slammed in our face—a wake-up call that sends us frantically searching for help—and we become anxious and our hope takes a beating. Yet as we look around us we become painfully aware that there are so many others who are struggling with much worse “tribulations” and we are drawn to our knees to humble ourselves before our loving Father God in prayer.

We have all been given a new vision that sees beyond our own personal problems to the suffering, as well as the joy, of others. Having been made newly sensitive to the plight of others, it is discouraging to contemplate the extent of the needs of not only our own family, our own church, and our own community, but of those who are oppressed, persecuted, homeless, and hungry all over the world.

Individually we lack the money, the knowledge, the power, the permission, the transportation, the language, the opportunity, or the time to wade into everyone’s sphere and set things aright. That’s why the Holy Spirit has given us the gift of prayer which is that act of going beyond our own resources to the source of all good, the solution to every problem, and the answer to every question—Almighty God.

We have been given access to God’s throne room through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. Jesus paid our debt with His life and adopted us into God’s family. Talking things over with Father through Jesus changes our whole outlook on life, for His thoughts are different and much, much greater than ours (see Is.55:8-9).

We learn to lay down our own agendas and listen to His heart so we can become one with His will.

A breakthrough in our understanding about prayer really captured us one morning as we were reading Philippians. We were galvanized by the words in the above familiar passage, “with thanksgiving.” They are tucked into the apostle Paul’s exhortation to let our requests be made known to God, and we were convicted of our anxiety level as we would pray the same prayers for the same people day after day without measurable results.

We examined our faith level, and to our chagrin and horror we found it just a little above “empty.” What had gone wrong in our prayer life? Where once we were praying for two hours in the predawn in our chapel, we realized we were now barely squeezing in 30 minutes of “obligatory” prayers between our Bible study and our daily Communion in our sunny library-sitting room. And yet we knew that many saints were counting on us to uphold them in the Holy Spirit as they navigated the shoals of life.

It suddenly struck us that we had not been praying with thanksgiving! We could be, and were, thankful for those answers to prayer in the past and we could thank God for the future that is yet to come (as we read in the Book of Revelation—we win!), but we had been mired in the discouragement of the “unanswered” present!

God is a NOW God: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of need.” (Psalm 46:1)

So we began to pray differently: “Thank You, God, for revealing Yourself in a special way to Your son as he is with his children today. We are thankful that You are bringing back to his remembrance the truth that he learned from the scriptures when he was young while he now searches how to teach his own children to be honest and obedient, and to be righteous.”

We thank the Lord in faith now for what He IS doing, not just for what He has done and will do in the future, and consequently find Him present in our prayers. Because He is the God of the present! We are overcome with gratefulness at His concern for those for whom we are praying and thanksgiving to Him flows out of our hearts without measure.

As we became more accustomed to praying with thanksgiving, our faith began to rise and we began to see and hear of answers to our prayers that we’d not experienced before, and God receives all the glory and thanks from us and from all those who have experienced His grace!

Our country was founded on prayer and thanksgiving. We even have a national holiday in November called Thanksgiving Day to commemorate the Christian Pilgrims’ God-given survival of their first few winters on this “new” continent. Details of the struggles of these brave first Americans to survive are beautifully set forth in “The Light and the Glory” by Peter Marshall and David Manuel. Early in their tenuous grip on this new world, an extremely severe winter hit them and in order to survive, they were reduced to carefully ration just five kernels of corn apiece per day. But every day they solemnly and gratefully thanked God for the food that they did receive, and none of them died of starvation.

They never forgot that it was Almighty God who sustained them and answered their prayers. Should we not all do the same?

Though our National Thanksgiving Day Holiday has been trivialized by calling it “Turkey Day” and scheduling parades and football games all day so that many families eat around their TV sets instead of around corporate thanks to God, it still draws more Americans to travel “back home” to visit their families than any other holiday.

May this letter be a reminder to all of us to be lavish with thanks for all that our God has bestowed upon us this year. And may we also be quick to thank the people who bless us in whatever capacity: from our parents who have sacrificed much to help us, to the baby that makes us chuckle; from the checkout counter girl at the grocery, to the postman faithfully bringing us the mail; from the tired waitress who serves us with a sweet smile, to the UPS driver who helps you with your packages. And especially to those conduits of God’s grace who bring us fresh manna, the Holy Spirit Words of Life (thank you Bill and Randy).

Everyone deserves to be recognized, accepted with love, and thanked for all the things that they do to make our life more pleasant, more productive, and more powerful in Jesus. It is just a reminder of how blessed we are by “the Lover of our souls.”

Our prayer is that every meal in this coming year would be a time for Thanksgiving, a time to appreciate each member of our family and those guests we may have. Take the time to gather as a family and share the graciousness we have found in every task during the day. Take time to listen to one another as they describe their day’s activities and relationships and join them in celebrating the successes, smiling at the humors, sympathizing in the failures, and seeing in everything the loving care of our God and Savior, and give thanks.

Join us in prayer:

Father God, we your children are grateful and thankful beyond our ability to express in words for Your hand upon us this year. We thank You for being with us through all the things that have occurred—both sweet and sour. We know it was by Your strength and love that we were able to be a witness of Your goodness in and through our lives. Your presence through the hard times, Your joy in our successes, Your tears with ours, Your understanding when we question, Your wisdom, Your insistence on our being moral and honest, and Your blessing us with bearing the fruit of Your Kingdom.

Lord, thank You for “being there” for us and not giving up on us!—or on me!

Hugs, and have a thanks-full holiday!

*Paul & Gretel*