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# CHAIN LETTER

How do you show others the letter of Christ written on your heart?

What are some of the signals you send that others tune into to read your letter? Think beyond explicit words and actions.

How do you adapt the presentation to each individual to whom you deliver the letter?

**2 Corinthians 3:3** – ...and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

## I) **We Are Carriers...**

Consider all that we communicate by our presence. We represent a type of person, a set of values, ideas, and beliefs. We are carriers of information in the form of our being and ways. Information that combines to convey a message to each person in our sphere of influence. The message received is often very different than the one we think we send. Sometimes it's a mess. Others can't make out any meaning in our presence. Other times, we get across exactly what we intend. This usually comes from living intentionally. Our beliefs, ideas, and values are thoughtful, connected, and expressed clearly in our behaviors and mannerisms. It is the will of God that we would be His letter to the people around us, clearly communicating His love to all.

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♦**Message delivered:** Every encounter, every time we are present with another, in all the ways we can present ourselves, we are sending signals. If the other is giving us any attention, the result is always message delivered. But what message? By your presence “you show (2 Corinthians 3:3),” something about your inner self. It may be minor, something insignificant, even unnoticeable. But it’s there. As always, perception is reality, and that is controlled by the one to whom you present yourself. Unlike some forms of communication, there is no cancel send button. Delivering God’s message properly takes care.

♦**Courier service:** Those of us revealed as followers of Jesus are compelled to recognize that we are not delivering our own message. We deliver His. We are His courier service, “a letter of Christ (v3),” destined for the people among whom we find ourselves. We depend upon couriers to deliver unaltered messages, exactly as we prepared them. So does He. Our obedience to Him is His unaltered letter. Obedience is the clarity with which others perceive Jesus in us.

## II) Of God’s Message...

Chain letters are an attempt to go viral without the use of modern technology. Write a letter asking others to send a copy to twenty other people. If a few do, soon the letter will reach hundreds, maybe thousands. We are chain letters of God’s message. He gives us each His message to humanity and asks that we share it with ten or twenty. This takes two intentional actions from each of us. Deliver our letter to others as it was written. Help them prepare their own copy of the message so it is faithful to the original.

♦**Taking dictation:** Faithful replication does not permit us to take editorial liberties with the original. The job is taking dictation from Jesus, word for word. Losing a small amount of fidelity in the first copy may not interfere with how the message is received. Repeat this a few times and the message will be distorted beyond recognition. We carry Jesus’ message, but what we deliver is “prepared by us (v3),” through our choice to accurately convey it.

♦**Invisible ink:** Early in history, God chose to write His message legibly. Everyone who had access could read it directly. This persists today in ways accessible to the masses. Just as we say that a picture is worth a thousand words, Jesus knows that His message is not easily received until it is brought to life. The letter we now carry is “written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God (v3).” A form of invisible ink more evocative than print, but dependent upon faithful preparation and presentation. Jesus’ message comes through clearly when our presence is unified with the Holy Spirit’s.

## III) From Heart to Heart...

This message can only be communicated from heart to heart. Preparation uses thoughtfulness and study. But there is nothing to practice until our heart takes in the message. Proud hearts cannot receive this letter. The mind won’t accept the perceived folly of self-denial as the path to life. It takes the heart to recognize the beauty of a world in which everyone lives for others, wielding divine power en masse.

♦**Etched in stone:** God showed us the limitations of a written letter. Our lives are dynamic, not etched in stone. A written instruction manual covering every contingency and situation would be useless. Who could read and remember it all? Much would be irrelevant in any modern moment. God used the written Law to get us to understand we are incapable of ruling ourselves with any set of limited knowledge about Him and His ways. His message is “not on tablets of stone (v3),” because it could not be clearly comprehended and useful for our purposes.

♦**Know it by heart:** Instead, we must know it by heart. He is beyond our capacity to know fully. So, God’s Spirit continually writes His letter “on tablets of human hearts (v3).” This permits us to be a dynamic letter, always faithful to His message, revised to be perfectly perceived by each person to whom He sends us. To some, it will be unusual kindness and respect. Others, a simple presentation of Scripture. Still others, rigorous debate about how to live. In each case, the fidelity of the message depends upon our obedience to the Holy Spirit.