

LETTERS ARE IMPORTANT

PREVIEW

Paul wrote in II Corinthians 3:2 (NIV), "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone." The King James Version says you are an "epistle," which means you are Christ's letter. What do the people in your world see when they "read" you? Let's dive in today to see how we can be a letter worth reading!

PRAISE

Have everyone pull out their phones and google "famous letters." Ask a couple students to share their findings with the club.

PARABLE

Has anyone here ever written a letter to someone? Do you like receiving letters? What is the most memorable letter you every received? Writing letters is becoming a lost art. Most of us just send a quick text or email or post something on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram when we want to communicate.

But there is something especially profound and moving about a personal letter. Indeed, as the art of (and dedication to) letter-writing sadly fades into history, I believe that a personal letter becomes more powerful than ever to lift someone's spirits, to inform and influence change, and to communicate depth of feeling and conviction. These letters and cards and notes are sometimes written to political figures or businesspeople urging pro-life or pro-family actions. Others contain helpful information and resources that we send to friends and colleagues. Personal correspondence has the power to pass along gratitude or congratulations, sympathy or encouragement, and reminders of the prayers we lift up for those to whom we write.

PRESENT

When we think of letters, we think of paper and pen or computer text printed on a page. However, according to the apostle Paul, you are a letter, and you were not written with ink.

Read II Corinthians 3:3.

- You are a letter from whom? (Christ)
- You are written not with ink but with what? (the Spirit of the living God)
- Instead of writing on paper or tablets of stone, where has Christ written His letter? (on human hearts)
- What famous Old Testament items were written on tablets of stone? (Ten Commandments)
- What happened to the first set of Ten Commandments written on stone tablets? (Moses threw them down and broke them when he saw the Israelites worshiping a golden calf.)

One problem with letters written on stone tablets or paper is that they can be ruined or lost or stolen, and then you can't read them anymore. Jesus writes His letter on our hearts where no one can ruin or steal it.

When Moses saw the Israelites worshiping the golden calf, he became very upset because he knew they were breaking the second commandment (Exodus 20:4), which was etched on the stone tablet he was holding in his hand. We have trouble obeying God's Word when it's just written on a stone tablet or a piece of paper. That's why God said it's time for something new.

Read Jeremiah 31:31–33.

- What is a covenant? (an agreement, a promise)
- God's new covenant is that His law will be written where? (in human hearts)

PRACTICE

Read II Corinthians 3:3 again.

- Who writes Christ's letter in our hearts? (the Spirit of the living God)

When you receive the Holy Spirit, Christ's epistle is written in your heart—and we're not talking about your blood-pumping organ; we're talking about the center of your personality—who you are, your feelings.

- If Christ puts His letter right at the center of you, do you think it will be easier to obey His words? (Yes. When His Word is in your heart, you will begin to love it!)

Once Jesus writes His letter in your heart, you become His epistle to everyone around you. How you act shows people what is written there. Since His Spirit is what writes His Word in your heart, they will see the fruit of the Spirit being manifested.

What is the fruit of the Spirit? (love, joy, peace, long-suffering [patience], gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance [self-control])



PRAY

Lord, we ask that You would write Your letter in our hearts. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and help us produce the fruit of the Spirit so that when people "read" us, they will see You.



PLUS

Take the time to write a letter to someone this week. As you do, remember that you yourself are a letter, an epistle that people are reading every day. Are you a letter worth reading?