

# Lifelines

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Topic: *Life... as a Letter*

## What Does Your Letter Say?

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I do a lot of writing, in various styles, but most of my writing relates to the difference that having a relationship with God can make in and through your life. God is the source of life, with all its potential and beauty. God is central in all aspects of my life, and I rejoice in that awesome fact.

Any good written communication has a purpose and a theme. The Bible introduces you to God, the Author. Murder mysteries entice you to get involved and solve the case; love stories tug at your emotions and romance. News stories give you the news. History books involve you in the facts about history.

One of the most common forms of communication is the letter. At its peak, letters were hand written, with even the style of forming letters on the page communicating something of the writer's personality. Letters from girlfriends often had beautiful handwriting, with swirls and frills, sometimes with little hand-drawn hearts. Letters from a business person were usually typed, and written with a matter of fact sort of stiffness.

In 2 Corinthians 3:3 (NLT) Paul writes the following to the Christians in Corinth: "Clearly, you are a letter from Christ, showing the result of our ministry among you. This letter is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts." Each human being is designed by God. Each of us has some basic similarities with other people, yet each of us has our own distinct personality, interests, giftedness, abilities, and preferences.

God is continually communicating Himself to each of us, and through the lives of those of us who commit ourselves to live our lives to accomplish God's overarching purposes in and through us. This is the beauty of life, as God created it to be. Look at nature! At this time of year, my garden plants are bursting out with blooming flowers. The flower attracts bees and other pollinators. The flowers get pollinated and transform into baby peppers or tomatoes or cucumbers. Within months the fruit ripens, becoming food for humans ... if the deer and birds don't get them first! Some plants go to seed, and the next spring new plants germinate and grow.

Tabasco pepper blooms become Tabasco peppers. Cucumber blooms become cucumbers. Variations occur within a species, but a pepper is always a pepper and never a cucumber. God has created you and me. We are humans, with common fixed parameters, but with lots of variations within those parameters. God is at work within each Christian to utilize our unique qualities and characteristics to communicate a unique message from God through each of our lives.

Which brings us to the lead question of this column: What kind of letter are you? What message is God communicating to the world only through you, using your uniqueness? When people read your life as a personal letter from God, what are they discovering about God and His workings within you, and through your life?

Christians are real people, with real excellences, and real struggles. As with other humans, when we are struggling we can become short-tempered, harsh, and sadly, even bitter. We all have a bad day when nothing seems to go right. We get frustrated and lash out. Hopefully, these "outbreaks" become fewer and fewer as we surrender more and more of our life to be under God's

grace, guidance, and power. As Christians, we can choose to yield our bodies, our minds, desires, and decisions to God so that He guides us and empowers us to become calmer, wiser, gentler, and more effective.

As a Christian, you are a letter through which God is communicating Himself to others. What communication from God are people receiving as God overlays and communicates His character through you to others? Are others seeing the spontaneity of God, or His ability to shift gears in anticipation of an unexpected encounter? Are they seeing the gentleness of God, filled with love and compassion? Do they see His forethought and wisdom in solving problems? Is the encouragement of God demonstrated through your heart, eyes, hugs and words?

You are an ongoing letter of Christ that He is using to communicate Himself to others. What message from Christ are you becoming?

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