

# The (Almost) Lost Art of Letter Writing

Dear Brother:

5-25-09

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

May this find you making peace (MT 5:9) and doing righteousness (1 JN 3:7), laying up in store for yourself ~~at~~ treasures in heaven.

I am writing to share something that has been on my heart for some time ~~was~~ now, actually for several years. I am concerned that we are losing something which is of great value, something that has blessed God's people time and again down through the ages. Shall I call it the [almost] lost art of letter writing?

Just ask yourself how long it has been since you have received a good, long letter; one that had enough value in it that you kept it in your drawer somewhere for future reference. It seems that we are getting so technology savvy that we value speed over volume and depth.

I know technology in and of itself is morally neutral - neither good nor evil. But it strikes me just how much of our communication these days passes through a machine - a phone, a computer, a radio, a microphone at the drive-thru at the bank. Machines are morally neutral, but they are also starkly impersonal.

When we talk on the phone, the listener cannot see our facial expressions, when we email, they cannot even ~~see~~ hear our tone of voice.

But beyond the stripping down of personality,

my bigger concern is that we are in too big a rush to communicate much of lasting value. How many emails are longer than a couple of paragraphs - if not only a few sentences? We zap off a text message while doing our shopping, or chat with someone on the cell phone while going through the drive-thru at McDonalds.

Quality communication? I'm afraid not! Anyway, I thought I would just share a few points in this letter on the art of letter writing. I know many people feel they cannot write, but quite frankly I see that as a cop-out. Sure, it is not as easy for some as others, just like driving a car is not as easy for some as others. Anyone who can drive a car can write a letter!

So here are a few pointers on letter writing:

1. Have a desire to bless someone. Don't ~~try~~ try to communicate a blessing if you don't have one to share. It may actually take time for this to happen; you may need to "build a burden". Suppose that you wanted to give your little boy a toy, but you simply didn't have one to give him. Would you sit back and say, "Well, when a toy falls from the sky I will give my boy a toy."

Of course not! You would either go buy one or look around for something to make one. In other words, ~~if~~ you would ~~it~~ take some time

to bless your boy, and you would not think it strange that you had to invest effort to provide a blessing. Well, the same goes for letter-writing - it may cost you time!

2. Turn off the phone and computer! Don't let the temptation to zip off a text or email cheat someone out of a meaty blessing.

"HOW R U?" will never, never replace a thoughtful letter. It's like comparing cotton candy with a steak and mashed potatoes meal!

3. Don't ~~the~~ send a bought card! A bought card carries the following message with it:  
~~the~~ "I did not have time to spend on you so I am sending this card hoping that the pretty picture on it will help you forget that I really don't have time to be personal with you."

Besides the fact that cards are "generic messages" that the sender may or may not have even read, they are a mis-use of God's funds many times. A plain sheet of paper costs a penny or two, while cards can cost several dollars.

So skip the cards - share your heart, not Hallmark's heart (which is maybe \$)

4. Be yourself and write what is on your heart, using your words. Don't try to sound like John Wesley or the apostle Paul. Your friend will be blessed to receive a letter from you that sounds like you!

5. Don't let misspelled words or mistakes

intimidate you. Just use whiteout or simply ~~scribble~~ mark them out like I have done in this letter. We all make mistakes; let's accept one another. Think about it: How many letters from a friend have you trashed after reading the first ~~line~~ line, because he misspelled a word? Did you say, "I can't believe it! This man had the guts to send me a letter with a mistake in it! How dare he!" Of course you didn't say that, and neither will your friends.

Well, I will close this letter trusting that I have inspired you to quality communication. The days of a good hand-written letter seem to be coming to an end. Should they cease to be, and all the communication between the saints consists of "I luv u. Hope u r fine.", what a sad day that will be.

So good-night and I would love to hear from you soon.  
your little bro.  
Mike



I will close this letter trusting that I have inspired you to quality communication.