

“Living in our First Love”

It is so easy to grow spiritually cold! In fact, it is possible to work hard for Christ and even to suffer persecution for His name, while having left our first love and our passion for Him. This is what happened to the Ephesian believers, to which Jesus spoke in Revelations 2. In verses 2 and 3 the Lord commends them for their "hard work", their "perseverance", the fact that they could not "tolerate wicked men", for testing self proclaimed apostles and even for enduring hardships for His name and "not growing weary." But they had committed a great sin, one that threatened their very existence as a church. In verse 4 we read:

"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." (NASB)

We don't know exactly how it happened. Apparently, somewhere in the middle of all their work for God, their hearts started to grow cold, they lost their passion for Christ, their thirst for His presence and their hunger for His Word; and even though they continued to be faithful to Him, in their hearts they forsook Him. The scariest part of it all is that this happened so subtly that they didn't even notice it.

It is important to understand that the same thing can happen to any of us today. We can be very involved in church work, have a good testimony, or even endure persecution for Christ without realizing that we have left our first love!

That is why it is so important for us to examine ourselves very often, by asking the hard questions about our own spiritual walk. Questions like: Am I more tolerant of sin than I used to be? Do I long to be with God as much as I used to? Do I desire to read His Word as I once did? Do I care, as I used to do it, about what God thinks about my actions?

Questions like these will help us to know if we have lost our passion for God. And if we have, we must, urgently, follow the instructions Jesus prescribed to the believers in Ephesus, in Revelations 2:5. Here is what He told them:

1) "Remember therefore from where you have fallen..."

In other words, we need to look back and remember what our spiritual lives used to look like. What has changed? What good patterns of behavior have we broken? What negative habits have we allowed to creep into our lives?

2) "... And repent..."

Once we realize where we have failed we must confess it before God and repent.

3) "... And do the deeds you did at first..."

We have to go back to those habits that once kept our relationship with Christ alive. Disciplines like prayer, fasting and the daily meditation in the Scriptures, which used to nourish our spiritual life.

4) "... Or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent."

We don't know exactly what will happen if we don't repent, but one thing is certain, there will be consequences.

Dear friend, it is my hope that this letter finds you deeply in love with the Savior. But if you are one of the many believers whose hearts have grown cold over time, I encourage you to come back to your Lord and to renew your commitment to Him. Don't let the world, your flesh or the devil rob you the blessing of loving Him with everything you are. We have been created to love God! And we are never happier than when we fulfill this supreme purpose. So go to the Lord, confess your sin, and decide to get rid of everything that is pulling your heart away from Him; and you will, once again, experience the abundant life He has prepared for those who love Him. (Jn. 10:10) May we always walk in the fullness of our first love! Amen!

In the love of Christ,

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