

# Don't Forget Your First Love

I have become friends with a man who recently came to Christ. It has been great to see this young man diving head first into God's Word, wanting to learn and grow.

He doesn't just accept what people tell him about the Bible or serving God. He goes and studies the Bible himself to learn all he can. He spends hours a day teaching himself through the power of the Holy Spirit how to live the new life to which he has devoted himself.

It has been refreshing to spend time with this man. Everything about Christianity is exciting and new to him. The more time you spend with such a person, the more you want to be around them. It reminds of you of when you first got saved and makes you hunger for the same excitement.

I was talking with another friend about how impressed I was with this man and his desire to completely change his life. This friend said something like, "Let him enjoy it while it lasts. Eventually, his excitement will wane."

This statement really bothered me. We shouldn't expect new believers to "come back down to earth." Instead, we should long to get back to where this new believer is.

We should long to have the same excitement daily in our lives. It is true that life's trials and tribulations do tend to weight us down. Yes, we get busy serving God and helping others, but this shouldn't come at the expense of our excitement and our gratefulness. We need to hunger for and long to love and be as excited about Jesus as we were the day we got saved. Actually, we should be more excited!

Growing in our faith and gaining victories over our sinful nature should excite and enthuse us. We should be more pumped than we have ever been. Unfortunately, many Christians have

let doing God's work rob them of enjoying a relationship with God. We have to change this. So how do we do it?

Well, thankfully the Bible tells us of other believers who fell into this same trap. They let kingdom business and good deeds rob them of their joy and happiness to be God's child. Let's read their story in Revelations 2:2.

*"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary." (NIV)*

This passage is written to the church in Ephesus. The Ephesus church started when Paul arrived in their town and witnessed to 12 men who were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke and tongues and prophesied. The Ephesian church became a growing vibrant church. When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to face persecution, he sent for the men of Ephesus to come and meet with him. Paul loved and respected this church.

This passage in Revelation shows us that the church in Ephesus was a model church. They held to solid doctrine, didn't tolerate any sin among there believers and they faced and overcame much persecution. They did good works and served the Lord faithfully. Sounds like a model fellowship. However, they had one problem.

*"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen!" (Rev. 2:4-5, NIV).*

The church in Ephesus had forgotten their first love. They had lost the joy they had when they first got saved and began following God. The years of ministry and serving God mixed with persecution and church issues had left them serving out of a sense of duty, not a love and relationship with God. The passion, the fire, the joy they had when they first came to

God was gone.

Notice God says, “look how far you have fallen.” He didn’t view this lack of passion as a good thing or spiritual maturity. He hated it. He hated the loss of fellowship, the closeness that He no longer experienced with the Ephesians church. He longed for them to see that they had become weary in well doing, that they had lost their fire and zeal.

It was church activity and business now, not service out of love and gratefulness. He wanted to change them. He wanted them to long for Him.

How many of us fall into the same boat as these people at Ephesus? We would do well to ask ourselves, “How far have I fallen?” Do we focus more on the service than spending time with the One we serve? If so, how do we fix it? How do we get back to our First Love? How do we get our perspective fixed again? Thankfully, the passage in Revelation gives us the answers.

1. **Consider how far you have fallen.** Stop and remember what your life was like when you first got saved. How did you feel? What did you do? How much time did you spend in prayer? Did you have a passion for reading the Bible? Do you remember the excitement you felt? Do you recall the trust you had in God? Remember how praise welled up inside of you? Stop and reflect on the weeks and the months after you first came to Christ and see if you still are the same. Has your love and passion dwindled? Reflection is step one to getting back to your first love.

2. **Repent.** The second thing to do is repent. The passage clearly says to repent for losing our first love. We have to ask God to forgive us for getting so busy doing for Him that we lost sight of our great opportunity of being with Him. Ask Him to forgive you for not being as sold out, on fire and hungry for Him. We need to realize the sin we committed and

ask Him to forgive us and restore us.

3. **Do the things you did when you first began.** The final thing we need to do is get back to where we use to be. We must return to pursuing God in our lives wholeheartedly. We need the passion restored. We should ask God to restore the joy we once had.

King David prayed an excellent prayer we can all pray. David was a man after God's heart. He wanted to love and serve God more than anything in the world. However, over time, he lost sight of spending time with God as he served God as king of Israel. As a result, David fell to temptation, had an affair with a married woman and murdered her husband to keep his sins under wraps.

David wasn't able to keep it quiet. The prophet Nathan confronted David and pointed out David's sin. David immediately repented of his sins. Thankfully for us we have this repentant prayer recorded in Psalm 51. After David repents of his sin, he remembers the relationship he used to have, and he asked God to forgive him. Let's read part of His prayer.

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psalm 51:10-12, NIV).*

Notice this prayer is a petition to God to restore the joy of his salvation, the first love he had lost. He wanted God to restore him to the place from which he had fallen. This is an excellent example for all of us to follow.

God longs for His children to get back to the first love they had when they first came to Him. He wants our relationship with Him to be as passionate and exciting as the day we knelt at the altar. He is just waiting for us to realize we have

fallen away from it.

He is waiting for us to repent for allowing our hearts to grow cold, and He is waiting with His arms open wide for us to be restored to the place we once were. He wants us to have a relationship with Him.

So what about you? Can you see areas where your love for God has turned into a responsibility to God? Do you still have the same joy and passion you had when you first came to Christ? Has complacency and spiritual exhaustion from doing good works robbed you from developing your relationship with God?

These are serious questions. We need to analyze ourselves and see if we have lost our first love. Then we need to follow Jesus' command in Revelations and get back to the place we fell. We have to do it today!

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