

Why We Need to Get Revelation 2:4 Right

This week, we will go a bit further in seeking to understand and keep our “first love” (Rev. 2:4) of the Lord. This is so important that the Lord told the Ephesian church that if they did not recover and keep this, their candlestick would be removed—meaning they would no longer be His church.

So we should be sure to get this right before anything else. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul exhorts believers to:

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

Our main job description as human beings is to love God. We should evaluate ourselves in a number of ways, but our first and most important evaluation is if we are growing in love for Him. This is the main thing that determines if we truly have a successful life.

The path of life is the way of ever-increasing love, beginning with our love for God. If we lose this increasing passion for Him, even our love for others will wane. We may still work hard and do great exploits, but as 1 Corinthians 13 says, these works will not count without love. Love is the main thing.

As we have learned, no drug-induced high can compare with the experience of “falling in love.” Not just euphoric, it is difficult to think about anything or anyone except for the one you love. In the natural, it’s a good thing that this extreme, all-consuming passion only lasts for a few months before transforming into a deeper, if less all-consuming love.

If it did not, we would hardly accomplish anything. However,

the church at Ephesus was rebuked for losing this first love! This indicates that with the Lord, this “first love” (Rev. 2:4) passion and euphoria cannot only be sustained, but it must be sustained.

As we discussed last week, human passionate love is a type or model of our relationship to the Lord. The love we have with God can be that much more substantial than what we experience with any other human. So how could we have this kind of passionate, virtually all-consuming love for the Lord and still function in life?

At first, it is difficult to function in life with this kind of passionate love for the Lord. It can be done, but it is hard. Those caught up in this were probably the original ones about whom it was said that they were so heavenly minded they weren't much earthly good.

This can be true of some, but if it is, then they have chosen the best part of this life. We must keep in mind that the Lord loved Mary *and* Martha. To have the “best part,” Martha needed to be more like Mary, but Mary needed to learn from Martha too, although not from her attitude. It is not either/or, but both.

James wrote that **“faith without works is dead” (James 2:26)**, but it is also true that love without works can be deadly. What husband would want to come home and find the house a wreck and the kids neither fed nor watched over? What if he asks what happened and his wife replies that she is so filled with love for him that she could not do anything but sit and think of him? Likewise, what housewife would like to hear her husband say he could not work and provide for the family because he can only sit and think of how he loves them so much?

As Heidi Baker says, “Love looks like something.” True love provokes action. Now think about this: Can love be commanded?

Can we command someone to feel love for us? God commanded us to love Him. How does that work? Love is not *just* an emotion, but it *is* an emotion. Who would want to hear their spouse say they love them by faith?

I have experienced the overwhelming emotion of being filled with God's love. It incapacitated me because of my immaturity in other basics, but it was wonderful! I want to experience it again and continually, but with the maturity to keep doing my job. As He showed me, I must grow into this. As we grow up into Him, we will grow in the emotion and the discipline of love because it is both. If God commanded us to love Him, we may have to begin with simply seeking to obey. If we do this, the feelings will come. Others begin with the feelings and have to learn the discipline. Both must be primary pursuits of our life.

Every other passion or drug is a counterfeit to this ultimate state of life—walking in His love. What could we possibly have better to do? What we become is more important to Him than what we do. Our highest purpose as human beings is to love God. We can only attain this and achieve what we are called to do by love. As we are told in 1 Corinthians 13, without the love, our works do not count. This is the main thing, and “the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” {eoa}

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