

When Love Grows Cold

Revelation 2:1-7

Thought for the Day. Everything in the Christian life is based on our love for the Lord. If we lose that, more accurately, if we abandon that, we will lose our testimony and our witness for the Lord (...and so much more—God’s blessing on our lives and our eternal reward!)

The church in Ephesus was a mature and active church. But it had one serious defect, so serious that the Lord threatened to remove the testimony of the church, perhaps even the church itself. It is a very serious thing when we abandon our love for the Lord; the consequences are severe. But there is hope. The Lord gives us five remedial steps that we must take to restore Him to His rightful place in our lives.

I. Remember From Where You Have Fallen (2:4-5)

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen...

- 1 John 4:19 – “We love because he first loved us.”
- Remember what it was like when you first learned of God’s love for you, how He sent His Son to die on the cross for you so that you might experience His forgiveness and receive His gift of eternal life.
- Remember the love you had for the Lord because of His love, mercy and forgiveness to you. Remember what it was like when you were walking with the Lord and experiencing His blessing on your life.

II. Repent (2:5)

- Repent – the translation of a Greek word made up of two terms: *meta / noeo*.
 - *Meta* means “to change” and *noeo* is the verb “to think.” To repent means to change the way we think.
 - Repentance is a change of behavior that results from a change in the way we are thinking. Remembering (thinking) leads to repenting.
- Five things according to Scripture that can cause our love for the Lord to grow cold:
 - Love for the world and the things of the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - Love of pleasure. (2 Timothy 3:4)
 - Love of family. (Matthew 10:34-37)
 - Love of self. (Matthew 10:38-39)
 - The increase of lawlessness and wickedness in the world. (Matthew 24:12-13)
- Repenting means that we change the way we think about these things. We recognize that these things have taken the place of the Lord in our lives and they’re not delivering the joy and satisfaction we thought they would. They promised freedom but they delivered bondage—addiction.
- Repenting means we recognize that Jesus is no longer on the throne of our life; we’ve replaced Him with other things. We decide to put Him back on the throne where He belongs.

III. Repeat the Works You Did at First (2:5)

...do the works you did at first.

- Long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word of God. (1 Peter 2:2-3; Romans 10:17)
- Present your body (your whole self) to the Lord as a living sacrifice on a daily basis. Stop conforming to the ways of the world; be transformed by the renewal of your mind as a result of feeding on God's Word. (Romans 12:1-2)
- Devote yourself to prayer. (Colossians 4:2-4; Philippians 4:6-7)
- Give thanks to God continually for His blessings. (Colossians 1:11-14)
- Spend time in worship, both public and private. (Psalm 95:1-7)
- Commit to fellowship with other believers on a regular basis. Encourage others in their walk with the Lord. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Serve others as Christ served you. (John 13:12-17; Matthew 20:25-28)
- Share your testimony with others; tell others about Jesus. Look forward to the Lord's Return. (1 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

IV. Realize the Consequences (2:5)

If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- Revelation 1:20 – "...the seven lampstands are the seven churches."
 - The church might cease to exist.
 - At the very least, the church would lose its testimony and no longer have an impact in the community for the Lord and His kingdom.
- This is a warning from the Lord, not only to the church, but also to the individuals in the church. (Revelation 2:7)
 - If our love for the Lord is growing cold, and we are not taking these remedial steps to reverse course, we may reach a point where the Lord will take us home to heaven prematurely rather than allow us to continue down that path. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - At the very least, we will lose our testimony and our impact as believers.

V. Reflect on the Rewards (2:7)

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

- "Conquers" what? Abandoning our love for the Lord; allowing our love to grow cold.
- Every believer in Christ is a conqueror—this is our Position in Christ. By faith, Christ's victory over sin, death, and Satan is our victory. By faith, we know that heaven, the **paradise of God**, is our eternal destiny. (1 John 5:4-5)
- But the Lord expects us to live out our Position in our daily Practice. Our eternal security in Christ is not a license to stop pursuing intimate fellowship with the Lord. If our love for the Lord has grown cold, we need to get serious about applying the remedial steps the Lord has given us to restore Him to His rightful place in our life.