

WHAT/WHO IS YOUR FIRST LOVE?

Revelation 2:4

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: There are many good things about the Church however some of the members of the Church have problems. Some seem to have other interests more important than their loyalty to the Lord Jesus. In Jesus' words, they have "left their first love." There should be no question as to where the Christian's loyalty lies and that is with the Lord Jesus. Sometimes, however, things happen gradually and then it happens: all at once one's interests and energy is being spent elsewhere than in spiritual matters and involvement with the Church. Jesus gave a warning to those whose interest has shifted away from Him to worldly matters, He will remove Himself from them.

I. THE FIRST LOVE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN

1. The first love of every Christian is sincere devotion to God.
 - Confidence in God
 - Devotion to God

II. THE FIRST LOVE OF THE CHRISTIAN REVEALS ITSELF

1. It reveals itself by having an intense interest in God's Word.
 - As family members communicate with each other when one is away, absent, so is the Christian interested in God's communication through His written Word, the Bible.
 - Those written words, the Bible come from the One the Christian loves supremely and trusts implicitly, from One in whom the Christian has a deep interest.
 - That first love causes the Christian to study God's Word intently and often with tears.
2. It reveals itself in an intense interest in God's Church.
 - The Christian loves to join other Christians in times of worship and praise in God's house, the local Church.
 - To worship in God's house and to partake of the fellowship of other Christians is something the Christian looks forward to.
3. It reveals itself in cheerful obedience.
 - Every Christian is happy to obey God and doesn't want to displease God in any way.
 - Christians fear sin and is grieved at the sins of others.
4. It shows a great zeal for the cause and honor of God.
 - The Christian will refrain from whatever might dishonor God.
 - There is a great interest in the advancement of God's cause.
5. It reveals itself in the Christian working/even laboring for God and for souls.
 - He/she can always be counted on to perform self-denying services cheerfully, not complaining.
6. It reveals that the Christian has turned away from the world's interests.
 - Godly things have become more important than earthly matters.
7. It reveals a deep desire to see the salvation of the lost.
 - The heart of the Christian is drawn to others with a desire to see them saved.

8. It reveals a love toward his/her enemies.
 - He/she will love his/her enemies with a tenderness and patience that no other person has.
 - He/she does not think of his/her "enemies" as enemies but as people who need the Lord.
9. It reveals itself in absence of selfishness.
 - The Christian devoted to God will not be devoted to self at the same time.
 - The Christian will have an intense interest in seeing the lost saved and a deep concern for the work of the Holy Spirit in his/her Church.

III. HOW DOES ONE KNOW WHEN HE/SHE HAS LEFT HIS/HER FIRST LOVE?

1. Whenever a Christian becomes more interested in worldly things more than the Lord Jesus, he/she is drifting away from his/her first love.
 - When his/her attention becomes more and more withdrawn from spiritual things.
2. Whenever a Christian begins to do his/her "service" to the Lord as a duty and not out of love to God.
 - His/her labors for God and devotion are not prompted by love and concern.
 - He/she forces him/herself into doing Church "work."
3. Whenever whatever "faith" he/she has does not work by love.
 - He/she may "say" this or that about relying upon the Lord, but his/her faith is lacking for there is no true love.
 - There is no cheerful obedience to God's law.
4. Whenever one begins to take the Bible and the Lord's Day (Sunday) very loosely.
 - He/she uses the Bible and Sundays only to make him/herself feel comfortable, thinking that if God is really in charge, then there's nothing left for him/her to do.
5. Whenever one begins to be satisfied with his/her "religion" more than close fellowship with God.
 - At one time the heart was lifted up and a deep sense of the presence of God was known but when that first love dies away, that awareness of God's presence disappears and what is left is but enjoyment of the church music and such.
6. Whenever one loses his/her first love, there is a loss of interest in about all religious matters.
 - Church services become only religious meetings and there is no concern for the lost or even who was in church service attendance, totally unaware of what is going on in his/her church.
7. Whenever one loses his/her first love he/she goes back into doing worldly things.
 - Dress styles change, etc.
 - Worldly activities take over Church activities.
8. Whenever one loses his/her first love there is an interest in other things (books, television shows, movies, internet, etc.) than in the Bible.
 - No more prayer for him/herself or friends.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF LOSING ONE'S FIRST LOVE

1. He/she will be brought back under the power of old sins.
 - Grace will decline and sin will rise back up and take over.
2. He/she will also have a sense of guilt where there once was a peace of mind.
 - There will be no longer the feeling of acceptance and favor of God.
 - His/her present "religion" is only formal and no serious involvement.
 - Doubts and distrust of him/herself as well as others arises.
3. He/she ceases to be frequent in prayer and loses his/her sense of God's presence.
 - Not going to the throne of grace anymore, a gap, a blank space occurs in his/her life.
4. There will be a constant tendency to deceiving him/herself.
 - There will be the false attitude that "I don't feel much, and I know my chief interests are in earthly things, but I think I am still alright with God."
 - The truth is that if one has left his/her first love, then the door to delusion has been opened.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Christian who has left his/her first love is a stumbling block to all those around him/her.
 - He/she is misrepresenting the Gospel and creating a false image of who/what a true Christian is.
2. Losing one's first love, the Lord Jesus Christ, is most disgusting to God.
 - It is a form of pretension, of godliness where the heart is not there.
 - It is nothing but hypocrisy.
3. It is a most dangerous condition to be in.
 - It is insulting to God.
 - It abuses and grieves the Holy Spirit.
 - It gives a false impression of what it is to be a Christian.
 - It can bring God's judgment and certainly His punishment.
4. Christian, where are you? Is the Lord Jesus Christ the first love of your life?
5. Christian, do you need to regain that first love?
6. Non-Christians, you can come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and what it is to have Him as the first love of your life.

