

REKINDLING OUR FIRST LOVE

Revelation 2:1-7

I. _____ Before Criticism – Being Real Sees Both The Good And Bad (1-3,6)

- A. **Serving (2a)** ^{2a} *I know your works,*
- B. **Sacrificial (2b)** ^{2b} *your toil*
- C. **Steadfast (2c)** ^{2c} *and your patient endurance,*
- D. **Separated (2d,6)** ^{2d} *and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, ...* ⁶ *Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*
- E. **Sound (2e)** ^{2e} *but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.*
- F. **Suffering (3)** ³ *I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary*

II. _____ A Loveless Relationship To God – What Matters Most Is Someone's Relationship With God (4)

⁴ *But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

- A. **Duty Replaces Passion**
- B. **Determination Replaces Passion**
- C. **Doctrine Replaces Passion**
- D. **Defensiveness Replaces Passion**

III. _____ With Steps For Obedience – Instruct The Right Way (5a-c)

⁵ *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

- A. **Remember Your First Love**
- B. **Repent Of Your Forsaken Heart**
- C. **Refresh Your Faithful Ministry**

IV. _____ Consequences – There Is A Price For Sin (5d)

^{5d} *If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

V. _____ God's Word – God Informs Us Of What And How To Be Right (7a)

^{7a} *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

VI. _____ With Hope – Our Victory Is In Christ (7b)

7b To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

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I. Compliment Before Criticism – Being Real Sees Both The Good And Bad (1-3,6)

- A. Serving (2a)** *2a I know your works,*
- B. Sacrificial (2b)** *2b your toil*
- C. Steadfast (2c)** *2c and your patient endurance,*
- D. Separated (2d,6)** *2d and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, ... 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*
- E. Sound (2e)** *2e but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.*
- F. Suffering (3)** *3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary*

II. Confront A Loveless Relationship To God – What Matters Most Is Someone's Relationship With God (4)

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

- A. Duty Replaces Passion**
- B. Determination Replaces Passion**
- C. Doctrine Replaces Passion**
- D. Defensiveness Replaces Passion**

III. Correct With Steps For Obedience – Instruct The Right Way (5a-c)

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- A. Remember Your First Love**
- B. Repent Of Your Forsaken Heart**
- C. Refresh Your Faithful Ministry**

IV. Communicate Consequences – There Is A Price For Sin (5d)

5d If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

V. Cite God's Word – God Informs Us Of What And How To Be Right (7a)

7a He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

VI. Comfort With Hope – Our Victory Is In Christ (7b)

7b To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

- A. A Promise Of Present Victory
- B. A Promise Of Future Paradise

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2 ¹ "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

²" 'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷He 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.'

Introduction:

1. Happy Father's Day!! - Except for many in Hong Kong who find Father's Day painful.
 - Mary Ann Benitez writes for the South China Morning Post: "Father's Day is especially upsetting for Mr X. Last year when he asked his son if the gifts he was carrying were for Dad, the boy said no, they were for his grandfather. 'I felt upset but what can I do?' said the psychiatrist, whose access to his two children is now down to a two-hour dinner every two weeks." ("Hong Kong dads, and mums, falling victim to 'parental alienation'", June 18, 2018, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-law-and-crime/article/2151134/fathers-day-not-happy-time-hong-kong-parents>)
 - Parents with custody are turning their children against the other parent
 - Half of their family is gone. Half of their identity is gone. Children go through grief.
 - This is called "Parental Alienation" and is a form of child abuse

2. Americans are doing better in the fathering role (a little)

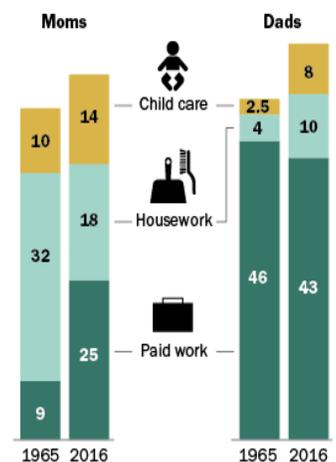
7 Facts about American Dads

By Kim Parker AND Gretchen Livingston

- "Dads are much more involved in child care than they were 50 years ago. In 2016, fathers reported spending, on average, eight hours a week on child care – about triple the time they provided back in 1965. And fathers put in about 10 hours a week on household chores in 2016, up from four hours in 1965. By comparison, mothers spent an average of

For both moms and dads, more time spent on child care

Average number of hours per week spent on ...



Note: Paid work includes commute time.
Source: 1965 data from table 5A.1-2, Bianchi, S.M. et al., "Changing Rhythms of American Family Life" (2006). 2016 data from Pew Research Center analysis of American Time Use Survey (IPUMS).

about 14 hours a week on child care and 18 hours a week on housework in 2016.”

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/13/fathers-day-facts/>



3. Being a dad is a challenging role.
- Baby years humble us because we don't know what to do
 - Preadolescent years are challenging because we're trying to help our kids figure out who they are in that tweener stage
 - Adolescent years – dads are dealing with their need for independence.
 - How do we apply ...

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ??

4. A key learning point for each parent in interacting with our kids is how to confront them when they've done something wrong.

5. Ancient Ephesus

- Ephesus – oldest & largest city in Asia Minor
- Given the title "Supreme Metropolis of Asia"
- It was also the capital of Asia Minor
- Had possessed a great library
- Had major trade route – major harbor & 4 major roads
- On the Cayster River, 3 miles from the Aegean Coast
- Proclaimed a free city by the Roman Emperor
- Home to the Roman Governor of the province
- It was the location of the Temple of Diana (goddess of fertility and the woodlands) or Artemis, which is one of the 7 wonders of ancient world (425' long, 220' wide, 60' high, 127 marble pillars – many overlaid with gold, huge folding doors) – est. 6th cent. BC
- Temple prostitution was part of the great sexual immorality in that city
- Today the ruins of the city are 7 miles inland

6. The Condition of the Church

- Established by Paul on his 3rd missionary journey (Acts 19-20)
- Paul spent 3 years there
- Timothy laid a good foundation there 30 years prior
- Tychycus, Apollos and the Apostle John also served there

- No church stands there today

I. Compliment Before Criticism – Being Real Sees Both The Good And Bad (1-3,6)

¹ "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²" 'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ... ⁶Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- v.1 "angel" or "messenger" - to the pastor or key elder of the church
- not an angel – b/c angels don't head up churches
- "right hand" – symbol of authority and power
- "golden lampstands" = churches (7) – lights in the community

A. Serving (2a)

^{2a}I know your works,

- "deeds" = plural of *ergon* (work)
- greatly involved in ministry
- active
- busy all the time

ie/ no problem getting people to clean up, cook up, set up, sign up

B. Sacrificial (2b)

^{2b}your toil

- "labor" – *kopos* – to the point of exhaustion (cf. Col 1:29 – 2:1)
- did something – did a great job – to the point of exhaustion
- ministry is hard work – demands of presence, emotional drain of counseling, challenge to find time to study and prepare, dealing with disappointment and criticism, hurting with the flock you love

C. Steadfast (2c)

^{2c}and your patient endurance,

- patient – steadfast
- *hupomeno* – lit. abide under
- not easily teetered – planted firmly in Word
- Timothy laid a good foundation there some 30 years back
- Tychicus and Apostle John also served there

D. Separated (2d,6)

^{2d} and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, ... ^e Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- “cannot bear” = *bastazo* – to bear, carry as a burden, endure, tolerate
- they couldn’t bear with/tolerate false teaching
- hated the Nicolaitans

2 views:

- 1) followers of Nicolas (apostate early deacon of Acts 6:5), antinomian sect that promoted licentious living, free love (love the one you’re with)
- 2) etymology of “Nicolas” = “one who rules the laity” or “laity-conqueror” – a heresy that exalted clergy over laity

- they believed in antinomianism, licentious living – no law, accountability

- exercised church discipline regularly

E. Sound (2e)

^{2e} but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

- “tested” = *peirazo* – to make proof of, test, prove
- tests their teachers teachings
ie/ had Bible open, cross referencing with their Apostle Paul Study Bible

F. Suffering (3)

³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary

- Dads need to communicate empathy with the struggles our kids go through today
- Christ was empathizing with Ephesus’ persecution for doctrinal stance
- Ie/ Do other churches consider FBC too conservative? My concern is to make sure we’re biblical. If people don’t

II. Confront A Loveless Relationship To God – What Matters Most Is Someone’s Relationship With God (4)

⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

Q: What does it mean to leave your first love?

“left” = “forsaken” – Gr. *aphimi* – “to leave, forsake, depart”
- an act in which one is personally responsible

Q: Is there a difference between *leaving* your first love and *losing* your first love?

- Left or moved away from original position of devotion to Savior
- Gradual departure
- Put action ahead of attitude, service ahead of submission, programs ahead of passion
- Ministry became mechanical

Q: Why is the Ephesian church so good at the above stuff, but lousy when it comes to loving Christ?

Q: How could they be good at the above items when they are not loving Christ as they should?

A. Duty Replaces Passion

Ie/ Martha & Mary

- Martha – strong sense of duty serving
- lost sense of just feeding off the Word & fellowshiping with Christ

- So busy **doing** that we forget **being**

ie/ get so focused on being a **pastor**, more than I could be a **child of God**

- fellowship **leader** over being a **servant** of God
- Bible study **leader** over being a Bible **learner**
- FBC **member** over being a **disciple** of Christ

- Our Asian background taught us how to get away with it – dutiful

- problem with the Pharisees **Matthew 23:23**

Q: Would you put off taking down the tables or washing the dishes at the next banquet so you could sing to Christ and study the Word?

B. Determination Replaces Passion

Ie/ get caught up in studying for finals – forget to eat, shower and call your girlfriend

Ie/ caught up at work – don't come home until late – neglect wife & kids

Ie/ ministry – not go home to family

- they "labored" – to point of exhaustion
- they were "steadfast" – nothing would move them

- great concentration on task, but forgot who they were doing it for

Q: We know what your last ministry did to help someone, but what did it do to help you grow closer to Christ?

C. Doctrine Replaces Passion

- some get so caught up in **learning** doctrine that they forget to **apply** doctrine
- God never intended truth to take the place of devotion

Q: When's the last time a sermon went past the head and down to the heart?

Q: When's the last time you applied something from your devotions?
Ie/ lackluster devotions?

D. Defensiveness Replaces Passion

- in their persecution – tendency can be for us to look at ourselves and feel sorry for ourselves

- get so busy justifying our right actions, we forget the Lord

ie/ churches in politics, civil rights – not wrong, but takes away focus
- countering an attacking media – not wrong, but can take away our focus

ie/ focusing so much on defending your faith before your parents that you lose the passion for the Savior
- argument over the person you love

ie/ marriage – argue – lose passion

III. Correct With Steps For Obedience – Instruct The Right Way (5a-c)

^sRemember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Ie/ usually think someone has “fallen” if fell into sexual immorality or something criminal
- but Christ points out that falling out of love is falling spiritually

- not saying you hate Christ, you still might love Christ – sense of duty

ie/ marriages stick together because of duty – love = responsibility
- but no passion

FIRST LOVE = Passionate love

A. Remember Your First Love

^{5a} Remember therefore from where you have fallen;

ie/ counsel married couples – heated argument, lost passion, not sleep together in same room

- remember dating

Q: Why did you marry him/her? What features attracted you?

- remember when 1st fall in love

- totally consumed by person you love

- ie/ date Daisy – think of her 24 hours a day

* Remember when you were a brand new Christian

- not know where John 3:16 was but you know He loved you and you loved Him

- served because you wanted to please Christ – not just a duty

ie/ date – do everything in the beginning, even talk mooshy

- after a few years – no longer open doors, talk affectionately

- happens in marriage – few years after the honeymoon

Q: How can you rekindle passionate prayer, meaningful devotions, making Him a part of your every day life?

Q: How can you refocus your worship so that He becomes your main desire?

Q: Who are you living your life for? You or the Lord?

B. Repent Of Your Forsaken Heart

^{5b} repent,

- repent of sin – losing your love for Christ is a sin
- *metanoeo* = turn

ie/ Tony Evans – traveling down the freeway, get off on the repentance off-ramp, cross over the grace overpass and get on the forgiven onramp – drive the path of righteousness

C. Refresh Your Faithful Ministry

^{5c} and do the works you did at first.

- “do the first works”

ie/ marriage counseling – teach Eph 5 – how to love as Christ loved

- go out on a date (kid-less) – rekindle the passion

- do the things you use to do when you were first saved
- witness with a fresh perspective
- read the Word with awe – like a babe desiring the pure milk of the Word
- pray – asking with a child-like faith – not the crusty, cynical faith (if such a thing)

IV. Communicate Consequences – There Is A Price For Sin (5d)

^{5d} If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- Re-ignite Your Flaming Testimony
- if not repent – lose lampstand
- lose light in community
- This church is no longer existent in Ephesus today – it had lost its first love
 - Q:** Has the light blown out on your testimony for Christ?
 - Q:** Has the mirror become tarnished as you reflect Christ?
 - Q:** How do your friends and family see you? Devoted to Christ or to fun or to education or your job?
- Heathley: “**Left love** means **lost light.**”

V. Cite God’s Word – God Informs Us Of What And How To Be Right (7a)

^{7a} He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- Listen to God

VI. Comfort With Hope – Our Victory Is In Christ (7b)

^{7b} To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

A. A Promise Of Present Victory

“overcomers” – earthly victory
 Gr. *nikao* (ie/ Nike) = conquer, overcome, prevail, triumph

B. A Promise Of Future Paradise

“Paradise” – pointing to heaven
paradeisos = Persian word meaning “a pleasure park”, “garden”
 - used in LXX to translate the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8-10)

- oriental thought = sum of blessedness
- ancient Jews = place of blessing after death
- used 3x in NT – each time referring to presence of God

“Tree of Life”

- literal tree
- symbol of eternal life
- literal place described by John in 25 verses – including New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem – not merely a symbol
- perhaps a collection of trees, not just one tree – in this beautiful park of heaven
- deliberately vague or not clear
- benefit, blessing, special reward

- ultimate victory to those who have trusted Christ

Conclusion:

- asked to speak on dedication and commitment
 - not call you to **do** something, but to **be** something
 - not to get you to witness, pray, read the Word, living sacrifice
 - you can do those things dutifully, without passion
 - I’m asking you to renew your passion, first love for Christ
 - when loving Christ passionately – can’t help but to pray with intimacy, read the Bible with awe, share eagerly the one whom you love
- ie/ in love with spouse – talk intimately, read e-mails interest and proudly be with her
- do that with Christ

Conclusion:

1. How Do We Challenge?

- Compliment
- Confront
- Correct
- Communicate Consequences
- Cite God’s Word
- Comfort

2. How Are We Challenged?

- Is Christ the One we love most?

- Have we lost our passion for Christ?
- What are we more passionate about than Christ?
- Will we repent and refresh our love and ministry to Him?

Discussion Questions:

1. Which parts of your life compares to the commendations and criticisms of the church at Ephesus?
2. What indications are there that the church in America has lost its first love?
3. How can you tell when you've lost your first love with the Lord?
4. How does losing your first love affect your ministry, worship, prayer life, witness, attitude towards work, friendships, dating life, marriage, parenting?
5. What specific things must you do to recapture your first love and/or to maintain your first love?
6. How does "busyness" mask devotion? Does this mean to be less busy for the Lord? Why/why not?
7. Is evangelism (being a lampstand) a root towards or a result from loving Christ?