

Have You Lost Your First Love?

Letter to the Church in Ephesus Revelation 2:1-7

1. Strengths of the Relationship in Ephesus

A. Ephesus was a Metropolis

B. John Was Their Pastor

John's two nicknames:

The Beloved Disciple

The Son of Thunder (see Luke 9:51-56)

Combination of Love & Zeal

C. The Church Shared this Combination of Love & Zeal

Two Categories of Zeal

1) *External Acts (v.2)*

2) *Internal Engine / Drive (v.3)*

Example of Zeal in Action – The Nicolaitans

Who are the Nicolaitans?

- The Name Means: Nikeo (to conquer, to consume) + Laos (the people) = Consumers of the people
- Irenaeus ties them to a Gnostic Heretic named Cerinthus
- Tie to Numbers 25 and The prophet Balaam (whose name means “To conquer the people”)
- They taught that the deeds of the flesh have no effect on the health of the soul

How did the church in Ephesus respond to these people?

- Passion (*hate*)
- Thinking (*tested...and found to be false*)
- Action (*cannot bear with those who are evil*)

2. Abandoned First Love (v.4)

B. Have We Abandoned our First Love?

Loving God is the goal of the Christian Life!

God ordained a redemptive history whose sequence fully displays his glory so that, at the end, the greatest possible number of people would have had the historical antecedents necessary to engender [the most] fervent love for God. . . . The one thing God is doing in all of redemptive history is to show forth his mercy in such a way that the greatest number of people will throughout eternity delight in him with all their heart, strength, and mind. . . . When the earth of the new creation is filled with such people, then God's purpose in showing forth his mercy will have been achieved. . . . All the events of redemptive history and their meaning as recorded in the Bible compose a unity in that they conjoin to bring about this goal. (Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible*, quoted in Piper's *Don't Waste Your Life*)

John Piper – God is most glorified when we are most satisfied with Him.



C. Consumers & Nicolaitans

Problem is 2-fold

Doctrine

We don't think, read, or discuss the right things

Love

We love *success* more

We love our *nation* more

We love our *family* more

We love *sex* more

D. Are We Consumers or Christ-Followers?

3. Consequences

Revelation 2:5b - If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

4. Remedy (V.5)

Revelation 2:5 - Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

Remember

Ephesians 2:1-10 - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Repent

Re-Do

5. Result (v.7)

Revelation 2:7 - 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.'