

Bible Studies

First Love

Ephesus was a very important city, it's population was around 250,000 people. The Gospel was preached in Ephesus by the Apostle Paul, Priscilla and Aquila. Acts 18:19. Latter Timothy ministered there. John the writer of Revelation made Ephesus his home. Today the ruins of Ephesus have been excavated, they are both extensive and impressive.

Read Revelation 2v1

What are the seven Golden lampstands? Revelation 1v30

What does it mean when Jesus says he walks among the lampstands?

The imagery is borrowed from the tabernacle in which stood a seven branch lampstand. It also makes an appearance in Zec 4v3. The Lampstand generally symbolizes the presence of God, specifically the Holy Spirit. In Mat 5v15 is symbolizes Christian witness in a dark world. So in a sense is it not only the Church, but Christ shining in the Church.

The Ephesian report card.

For each of these churches Jesus gives a current status report, the good things and the bad.

You work hard



You persevere (twice)



You cannot tolerate wicked men,



You test those who claim to be apostles but are not.



You endure hardships for my name,



You have not grown weary.



Was this a good Church or a bad Church?

Every virtue carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Mounce.

How could these virtues become vices?

Why was Jesus not satisfied with the Church?

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Revelation 2:4

The clear tone of the passage is that the lose of their first love had rendered futile all the good work and perseverance of the Church. This lose outshadowed all the positive actions of the Church and if unchecked would lead to it's demise.

Is it possible to give every impression of being good, yet still not please God?

"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." Galatians 5:9

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Sam 16:7

Is it better not to do good than to do good for wrong motives?

I would say a clear no, the illustration given in Philippians 1v15-18 is clear. Obviously it is best to do good works from a good motive. (by love, Phil 1v17) for this we will receive a reward.

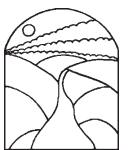
Refusing to forgive someone because you would only be doing it from a sense of obligation. Or refraining from giving because you would only be doing so to procure God's blessing. Are, when it is all boiled down, just excuses for disobeying God.

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What is the First love?

What do you think it could mean to loose your first love?

What it's not (but is true anyway)

We all have a first calling on our lives, it may be to Sunday School, to our children or to intercession etc. It is the key thing that God has called us to do. Sometimes we forget this and neglect what God has made our priority.

What would be the consequences of this?

What is your primary calling?

How seriously are you taking it?

Neglecting God's primary call is a serious thing, but it is hard to see why it should have such dire consequences. It must go deeper than this. The fact that it effects our whole Christian life suggests it is something fundamental, something to do with motives.

Secondly. Many Christians, (not all) experience an euphoria when they first get saved, along with it goes an enthusiasm and zeal. But this is not the 'first love' Revelation speaks of. As in a human relationship, romantic love inevitably weans with time, it must be replaced by a more stable kind of love. So with Christ. While we should always *keep our spiritual zeal serving God*, and while there will be spiritual highs in our lives, we must keep pressing on. We cannot live on how we feel.

What should our first euphoria be replaced with?

What happens if it's not?

What it is

What is the greatest command?

What is the second greatest?

Our first love is our love for Christ.

It is our relationship with Jesus.

It is the place God takes in our lives

It is our 'connection with the Head,' Colossians 2:19

The trouble with the Ephesians was they were doing things out of duty not devotion. In consequence even the good things they did, failed to bear right fruit.

What are the dangers of doing things out of duty?

What happens when service takes the place of the one we serve?

What should you do if you are working from duty not devotion?

What are the two things Revelation tells us to do?

Why do we need to repent?

What are the things we did at first?

What does remove your lampstand mean?

Why is loosing your first love so serious?

What two things should your work for God be motivated by?

Where are you at.

Do you love Jesus more or less?

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Are you more dedicated to his serve now?

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How much of what you do is from duty, how much devotion?

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