

“LEFT FIRST LOVE”—COULD IT HAPPEN TO YOU?

By Keith Greer

Do you remember how you felt when you came out of the water following your baptism into Christ? Free! Sin no longer held you in bondage. Pure, justified, and reconciled to Him. A Christian, and member of the family of God.

You began your walk as a child of God, studied the Bible every day, prayed regularly, and shared the gospel with others. When something needed done, you volunteered. The fire was burning brightly and your soul was at peace.

Days turn into months and months into years. Today, that day is a distant memory. The more involved you become in the Lord's church, a change occurs. Brethren are not perfect. Many don't care about the Lord's work. People sometimes don't seem to have brotherly love. Instead of trying to lift you up, they bring you down.

Does this picture sound familiar? It should. It happens over and over in the Lord's church. Why do so many brethren seem to lose their zeal and diligence for the Lord and His work? Simple--heart trouble. "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." {Revelation 2: 4} How did it happen to the church at Ephesus?

Here is a church who was laboring, had patience, could not bear those who were evil, exposed those false apostles, and hated the deeds of sinful men. In Paul's letter to this church, the book of Ephesians, there was not one word of rebuke. What an excellent commentary about a church! What church would not be proud to have these traits?

One point really hits me between the eyes about this church. All the good they were doing, things for which they received commendation, could not cause the Lord to overlook her deepest problem.

What does it mean "**left their first love**"? Can a church do all the right things: sing, pray, give, partake of the Lord's Supper, and teach the gospel, take care of all the outward appearances of doing the Lord's will, hate evil men's false teaching, and sins which God hates, and still be wrong? Yes! How can it be?

What is the motive? Why do we do the things we do for the Lord? Could we be guilty of "going through the motions"?

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." {1 Corinthians 13: 3} Love must be the motive!

My work and worship to God must be done, not by just obeying Him out of a sense of duty, but from the heart; my desire to please Him, not out of I "have to"! Can we just begin to do things out of habit and not sincerity? Does attitude mean anything?

Corinth corrupted the Lord's Supper; some were giving grudgingly; some were jealous of others' spiritual gifts. Hearts were in the wrong place. What can fix the problem?

God gives a divine remedy in His letter to the church of Ephesus. "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent." {Revelation 2:5}

REMEMBER. Remember the zeal, diligence and fervency you once had. REPENT. Turn away from this course, admit wrong and correct it. FIRST WORKS. Do those things done in the past from the heart. What is your motive for serving God? Each of us must take a good and honest look at our heart and see if maybe this problem could be plaguing us – what about you dear brother? ***