

OCC Connections Bible Study (Group or Personal)

First Love: Remember, Repent, Do: Revelation 2:1-7

Read for context: Jeremiah 2:2-5; John 14:15; 1 John 4:19-21; Ephesians 1:15-16.

Big Idea: Jesus calls the church at Ephesus (and some of us) to return to Him, our first love. Without love for Christ and others, even being right, having sound doctrine or doing good becomes empty. If we personally or corporately end up just as Ephesus, let us respond by **remembering** our devotion to loving God and others, **repenting** (changing our mind), and **doing** (loving) the works we once did.

1) Read the Text

Read **Revelation 2:1-7** aloud.

(Consider also *Jeremiah 2:2-5; John 14:15; 1 John 4:19-21; Ephesians 1:15-16.*)

Ask the Lord to understand and to live out the truth in love.

2) Observe the Text (*choose 2–3 prompts*)

- How does Christ describe Himself in v.1, and what does this reveal about His relationship to the churches?
- What does Jesus **commend** in vv.2–3,6?
- What is the central **rebuke** in v.4, and what does “*first love*” mean?

- What three commands does Jesus give in v.5, and what is the warning if they refuse?
- Who are the **Nicolaitans** (v.6), and what does Jesus oppose about their **deeds**?

3) See the Connections

Context: Ephesus was known for standing on truth, their hard work, and their toil. Despite all of this, the church had drifted from their first love (*protos agape* - see below). The Apostle Paul once commended their “*faith in the Lord Jesus and [the] love for all the saints*” (Ephesians 1:15). Yet, years later they departed love in the name of truth. Christ warns the church that **truth without love can lead to a lampstand removed** (witness lost).

Word Work:

- **First love** (*πρώτην ἀγάπην*) Strong's: G4413 and G26: devoted, primary love; the *child-like* affection of early faith.
- **Left** (*ἄφηκες*) Strong's: G863: to abandon/leave; indicates a willful departure.
- **Repent** (*μετανοήσον*) Strong's: G3340: to change mind and direction; a wholehearted turn.

Cross References:

- **Jeremiah 2:2-5:** God remembers Israel's "betrothal" love.
- **John 14:15:** Loving Jesus expresses itself in obedience.
- **1 John 4:19-21:** We love because He (God) first loved us; love for God overflows to others.
- **Ephesians 1:15-16:** Ephesus' earlier commendation for faith and love from the Apostle Paul.
- **1 Corinthians 13:1-13:** Love *within* the body of Christ.

4) Interpret (What It Means)

- **Truth Without Love Cannot Sustain Witness:**
The Ephesians were discerning and diligent, yet Jesus rebukes them for *abandoning* love. *First love* is not just emotion. This kind of love is devotion to Christ. This kind of love naturally **overflows in love for His people**.
(Consider the great commandment to love God and love others: John 13:34-35)
- **We Are Cared for and Accountable to Christ:**
Christ **holds** the stars (messengers) and **walks** among the lampstands (churches). He protects, guides, and examines the fruit of churches (and individuals too). To **remove a lampstand** is to remove a church's witness and vitality. Essentially, with a lampstand removed, a church will die. Jesus also hates the **deeds** of the Nicolaitans (idolatrous/immoral compromise), not the people.
- **The Remedy: Remember, Repent, Do (Love)**
Jesus prescribes three actions (v.5):
 - **Remember** your former devotion. Think of how you were before; how you **loved** God and people.

- **Repent:** change your mind and direction.
 - **Do** the first works: love God and love people.
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5) Apply (How We Live)

- **Keep Your First Love for Jesus and Others**

Keep that childlike awe of Christ (*Matthew 18:3*). Be in awe and wonder of who He is and let love be manifest in both **word** and **deed**.

- **From Love Flows Truth and Witness**

God loves us first. This love is for all who believe. From this love and belief in Him calls us to grow in truth and witness to others. Speak the **truth in love**; bear witness through good words and good works that point to Jesus.

- **Guard the Lampstand with Truth and Love**

Protect your personal and corporate testimony. Consider how you live your life. Refuse "Nicolaitan-like" compromise.

- **Ask yourself:** What is God asking you to do currently? What does living in the light of love and truth look like today?
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Commitment Log (7 Days)

- **Pray:** *"Lord Jesus, restore my first love. Help me love You and Your people wholeheartedly."*
- **Plan:** Choose **one** "first work" to restart this week.

- **Practice:** Daily examine: *Has my drive to be right overtaken my love for Jesus and His people?*
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6) Pray the Text (Rev 2:1-7)

- **Praise:** “*Jesus, You hold the churches and walk among us. You see all.*”
- **Confession:** “*Forgive me for leaving my first love.*”
- **Dependence:** “*Rekindle my love for You and Your people.*”
- **Mission:** “*Make us a lampstand that shines with truth and grace. Help us remember, repent, and do.*”

7) Life Stage Helps

Parents/Kids: Define “first love.” Draw hearts and list family ways to love Jesus/others this week.

Couples/Roommates: *Have we drifted?* Identify and restore one “first work.”

Students/Young Adults: Name **one** area you’ve grown critical/cold; replace it with a love-action.

New to Faith: Ask a mature believer: *What does first love look like daily? How do I keep it?*

Singles/Widows/Seniors: Read Jeremiah 2:2-5; write a prayer asking God to restore early devotion.

Notes / Questions