



Sermon Discussion Guide

"First Love"

Revelation 2:1-7

August 23, 2015

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Optional Opener:

During your time in school, did you have a "first love" and if so, what do you remember about how s/he made you feel?

Questions:

Please read together Acts 19 (perhaps taking turns reading aloud) for background on Paul's time in Ephesus.

1. The church at Ephesus eventually became one of the most influential churches in the history of Christianity. It was, as Darrell Johnson writes, founded by the Apostle Paul, nurtured by Priscilla and Aquila and Timothy, pastored by the apostle John, and church home to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

What strengths had made for such a church (vv 2-3)? How might its strengths have been the cause of its failure?

2. What or who is the love the church at Ephesus had at first (v 1)? Why was "abandoning the love you had at first" (v 4) so tragic for the church at Ephesus? Why is such abandonment tragic for any church?

3. What is repentance? Why is it necessary for the church at Ephesus (v 1)? Why is it necessary for any church?

Practical application:

4. What are the gradual and imperceptible ways we shift focus in our lives that cause us to slide away from devotion / affection / intimacy with God?

Prayerful application:

5. Can you recall experiencing God's love for the first time, or what it was like to come into a love for Jesus Christ that first time? Reread Rev 2:1-7, slowly, and pray as a group that God would help you recall that love - that He would turn your hearts again towards Him, to rediscover Him in such a way.

6. Pray together to lift up others in your life that come to mind during the prayer time - that God would turn hearts anew towards Him and that these persons in your life would remember and rediscover Him as their first love.