

PRIORITIZE YOUR LOVE FOR THE LORD

(Revelation 2:1-7)

Loving the Lord should be the utmost priority and supreme devotion of every Christian (John 15:9-10; Matt. 22:37; Jude 21). The ideal life for a believer is this: as we grow older in the Christian faith, our love and passion for God should all the more increase and intensify. But such is not the case with the Ephesian believers, and even with many Christians today. Reflecting from Jesus' message to the Ephesian church, here are four lessons that could help us evaluate ourselves concerning the state of our love and affection for the Lord:

- 1. Recognize Jesus' abiding _____ in His church.***
The Lord Jesus introduces Himself to the Ephesian church as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand (Rev. 2:1). This means that Jesus has ultimate authority and power over His church and its spiritual leaders (Rev. 1:20; Ex. 15:6; Lk. 22:69). The Lord also identifies Himself as the One who walks among His churches. This description of Christ is a reference to Jesus' abiding presence and care for the welfare of His redeemed people (Rev. 2:1).
- 2 Consider Jesus' _____ of His church.***
After asserting His claim of power and presence in His church, the Lord Jesus commends the Ephesian believers. He begins his commendation with the words "I know." When Jesus said "I know," His awareness of what's happening in the church connotes full and complete knowledge. In His thorough evaluation of this church, Jesus praises them for three great qualities: their diligent labors, their doctrinal discernment, and their patient endurance (Rev. 2:2-3,6).
- 3. Examine your heart in light of Jesus' _____ against His church.***
In the midst of their exemplary qualities, the Ephesian believers left out the most essential virtue in the life of the church and of every believer: the priority of loving God with wholehearted devotion. Our Lord Jesus rebukes them for abandoning their first love (Rev. 2:4). The word "first" refers to that initial fervor and enthusiasm of their love for Christ immediately after their conversion. The Ephesian Christians no longer expressed their zealous and passionate love for God the way they used to do. Their love for our Lord Jesus has diminished in terms of its zeal and its enthusiasm (Matt. 22:37; Eph.6:24).
- 4. Heed Jesus' _____ to His church.***
The Lord Jesus issues three commands which are pathways to rekindling the fervency of our love for the Lord: remember, repent and resume (Rev. 2:5). To those of us who conquer through Christ, who by the grace of God overcomes the sin of declining love for Jesus, the Lord promises that we will enjoy the blessedness of the eternal life with God and His people in His eternal kingdom (Rev. 2:7).