

## First Love Fellowship 9-11-2016

### Rev 2:1-5

*"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. 2 'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.*

It glorifies God to deliberately & joyfully choose messed up, not okay, sinful people.

- Christian, don't be content with "not being okay" but remember WHOSE you are & like athlete diligently pursue your goal...Christlikeness .

We become like someone by learning about them & spending time with them.

- Christians learn about Jesus in Word & spend time with Him in prayer.
  - Read/study Word: we are sometimes good at learning about Lord but not fellowshiping with the Lord in Word.

There are many purposes for prayer but probably the most ignored is fellowship with God.

- Praying honors, delights, and glorifies God by acknowledging our dependence upon the sovereign God & indicates that we're genuinely convinced of His wisdom, love, goodness, and power.
- But God not only wants us to trust and depend on Him, but He also wants us to love Him & fellowship with Him. Ps 17:7-8, Ps. 18:19
  - God wants us to know Him intimately & delight in Him.
- Prayer is the doorway to an intimate relationship with the omnipotent, sovereign God, who is spirit. Jn 4:24, Mt 22:37

The christian life without prayer is like marriage without communication.

- You have a bond but lack intimacy.
  - God wants you to love him warmly as a husband, not just serve Him dutifully as your Lord.

When you pray it's usually a "to do" list for the Lord not just to be with Him.

- Imagine if only talked to loved ones like you talk to Lord in prayer.
  - Maybe your afraid of intimacy with God because your afraid of it with others.

God's plan is that like in marriage, our communication with Him reflects our desire for & delight in Him. Ps 37:4-5, 1 Pet 1:8-9, Eph 3:17,

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Eph 3:17

Spurgeon: "Look at how close Paul wants Jesus to be! You cannot get a subject closer to you than to have it in your heart. "*That Christ may dwell*"; not that He may call upon you sometimes, as a casual visitor may stay overnight, but that He

may *dwell*; that Jesus may become the Lord and permanent resident of your inmost being, never to leave again. Observe the words: that He may dwell in *your heart*, the best room in the house! Not in your thoughts alone, but in your affections; not merely in the mind's meditations, but in the heart's emotions.”

- “Really wants to be with me. I’m first in their heart.

Prayer should include ingredients that are found in an excellent & intimate interpersonal communication:

- Express your enjoyment of who they are....worship...Ps 145
- Apologize when you hurt/offend them....confess our sins...1 Jn 1:9
- Express appreciation for things they do....gratefulness....1 Thes 5:18
- Inform of needs....ask Him for help/direction...Mt 11:28-30, Lk 11:9-13
- Listen to what say....listen for His answers/instruction. Jer 33:3, Ps 46:10
  - Listen & silent use same letters.

In prayer do you delight in Him or do you enter God’s presence only as “work”, obligation or duty rather than simply pleasure of His company?

- Often we are so busy “doing” prayer that we forget to “fellowship in” prayer. Lk 10:38-42, Rev 2:2-5a, #1 Bro Lawrence:  
#1 “That many do not advance in the Christian progress because they stick in penances, and particular exercises, while they neglect the love of God, which is the *end*. That this appeared plainly by their works, and was the reason why we see so little solid virtue.”

- The cross bought you salvation, freedom & relationship/fellowship.
- Prayer is the opportunity to enjoy the pleasure of His sweet company.
  - *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Bro. Lawrence
- — Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God
- “We must know before we can love. In order to know God, we must often think of Him; and when we come to love Him, we shall then also think of Him often, for our heart will be with our treasure.”  
— Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God
- “Let us occupy ourselves entirely in knowing God. The more we know Him, the more we will desire to know Him. As love increases with knowledge, the more we know God, the more we will truly love Him. We will learn to love Him equally in times of distress or in times of great joy.”  
— Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God
- “Let him then think of God as much as possible so that he will gradually become accustomed to this little but holy exercise; no one will notice it and nothing is easier than to repeat often during the day these little acts of interior adoration.”

\*By grace Jesus drew you to Himself because of His incredible love. Your prayer was probably different as new believer... it’s time to return to your first love through prayer!