

HOW TO BE AN OVERCOMER

(Memory verse: Revelation 3:20)

RENEW YOUR FIRST LOVE!

(Revelation 2:1-7)

I. JESUS KNOWS!

* Our Lord is aware of our pagan culture and knows every church!

1. After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the *image* which fell down from heaven?” (Acts 19:35).
2. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: “I know” (Revelation 2:1, 2a).

II. JESUS APPROVES!

* Our Lord commends their deeds, diligence, doctrine and discipline!

1. “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary” (Revelation 2:2, 3).
2. “Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Revelation 2:6).

III. JESUS GRIEVES!

* Our Lord admonishes the church for leaving their first love!

1. “But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love” (Revelation 2:4).
2. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything (Colossians 1:18).

IV. JESUS COUNSELS!

* Our Lord instructs all Christians to overcome by renewing their love!

1. “Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent” (Revelation 2:5).
2. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).

LIFE GROUP FLOW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“RENEW YOUR FIRST LOVE”

An important Guideline of Life Groups: Being true Overcomers demands that we keep our first love for Jesus vibrant! Discuss with your Life Group fresh ways that you can promote first love for Jesus in your group times together.

Getting Started:

1. How close do you sense your love relationship with the Lord is today (Matthew 22:37)? Do you have an accountability partner to help you see your “blind spots”?
2. What are some common distractions or wrong mindsets that cause serving Christians to leave their first love?

Discussing Truths:

1. Why is it important to distinguish between someone who “left” their first love and someone who “lost” their first love?
2. There were a lot of things that the Ephesian church was doing right. What did Jesus commend the church for doing well (Revelation 2:2, 3)?
3. How can we apply Psalm 51:10 and Proverbs 4:23 and Hebrews 2:1 in regards to renewing our first love for Jesus?
4. What can *Church of the Woods* do to better shine the Light of Jesus’ love in our mountain community? How will you help make that happen?
5. In what ways did the nation of Israel precede the Ephesian church in leaving their first love (Jeremiah 2:2, 13)?
6. If you are single, how is your first love for Jesus modeled in your contentment? If you are married, how is your first love for Jesus modeled in your marriage (Ephesians 5:32)?

Now What? Application:

1. Take time to remember your former passion for the Lord and repent of any slippage and repeat your first love practices.
2. Is there any “silting” going on in your life, those “little compromises” that need to be halted immediately?