



Homes of H.O.P.E. Prayer and Study Guide #12
Based on sermon: “Bring Back that Lovin’ Feelin’”
Preached March 14, 2009

1. Read Revelation 2:1-4. Share testimonies about your first love experiences. When and how did you first accept Jesus Christ as your Savior? How did you feel? How did this change your life?

2. When Jesus says, “I know your deeds,” He’s really saying “I know *you*—I know everything about you.” Read Psalm 139:2-6. How does it make you feel knowing that God knows you this intimately?

3. What was good about the Church at Ephesus? How could a church like this lose its first love for Christ?

4. Discuss this statement: *You can be hard-working and yet be hard-hearted. You can be orthodox and stubborn as an ox. You can be intolerant of error and make the error of being intolerable. It is the love of Christ and love for Christ that means everything!* (Read 1 Corinthians 13 and discuss how this relates to our love for God.)

5. How does love for God die? Does it happen overnight or slowly over time? Discuss each of the three reasons below:

- Substituting duty for delight
- Doing instead of being
- Breaking your vows (spiritual adultery)

Add to this list some reasons of your own. Which of these do you struggle with the most?

6. Jesus foresaw a falling out of love with Him and others at the end of time. (See Matt. 24:12.) The word “wickedness” is *anomia* which means “illegality—violation of law.” How can this apply to Christians?

7. Discuss the following statements: *If a church has grown loveless, it may be because it has become lawless. A lawless church is really a legalistic church because it cares more about what it considers important than what God considers important. It sets up its own laws and pronounces “grace” over whatever it doesn’t want to do, the same way the Jews used to pronounce “Corban” over money they didn’t want to provide to care for elderly parents. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.*

8. Read Revelation 2:5. God’s remedy for lost love consists of three solutions: Remember, Repent, and Repeat. What does God want us to remember? What do we need to repent from? And what do we need to repeat? Make these answers very practical. Try to avoid philosophical or general answers.

9. In what way is prayer without intimacy like marriage without love? Don't pray because it's important. Pray because you are desperate—for God! But what if you're not desperate for God? What do you do?

10. Read Revelation 2:7. God gives a promise to “him who overcomes.” What needs to be overcome and how is this achieved?

* Who were the Nicolaitanes? They were a Gnostic sect that plagued the churches at Ephesus and at Pergamum (see verse 15). Apparently, they taught that the deeds of the flesh did not affect the purity of the soul and have no bearing on salvation. So they indulged in the sinful practices of Ephesian society and claimed it didn't matter because works of the flesh couldn't touch the soul. When we rationalize sinful behavior we exhibit the spirit of the Nicolaitanes. (See question #7.)

Take time to pray for what the Spirit revealed in this discussion. This may be a very personal time of recommitment and repentance. Don't rush the Spirit!