

When We Love Life We Can Live Life to the Fullest!



Commendations are the positive attitudes and actions of an individual, a business, a country, a church.....

The Seven Churches mentioned in Revelation, Chapters 2 & 3 are typical of the churches in Biblical times...and, as you will see, typical of the contemporary (today's) church.

**Commendations/Positive Actions of the Church at Ephesus:
Revelation 2:1-3, 6, last week**

- (1) **Work hard...doing, action oriented,**
- (2) **Endurance under pressure, persecution, and problems,**
- (3) **Tested and weeded out those who vocally accused and intended to disrupt godly living... Tested those who were trying to persuade them to enjoy what the world had to offer...those who were saying, "You are saved, sanctified, and secured...now, why not have some fun and enjoy the thrills of the life outside the church."**
- (4) **You hate the actions of the Nicolaitans (unbridled immorality and compromise with the world).**
"Atta boys" are only good when you know that you are living up to the standards set for us by the Word.

PRAISE MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD...CRITIQUE MAKES YOU BETTER! **HOWEVER...Even Then...with all the commendations, the Ephesus Church had a problem....**

Revelation 2:4-7, "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the

churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

The Risen Christ stated:

“You have left your 1st love!”

Three (3) meanings...“You have left your 1st love.”

1. 1st Enthusiasm is gone.

Honeymoon period...Jeremiah 2:2...devotion of Israel to God in the early days. God says to the nation “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride.”

Enthusiastic, wanting to please...hating to disappoint.

2. Love for the Brotherhood is Gone!

Meaning that they first loved each other in early days of church, dissention had never raised its head....but the witch hunts...heresy hunting had killed love. The weeding out also cost in fellowship. The price of weeding out is too much when it takes the place of love for the brethren.

Note: *There is a place for weeding out when there are members who are not in line with the Scriptures and is/are causing havoc in the church due to their disrespect for authority, their sinful actions which are causing a bad reputation for the church, and a general attitude of disruption between members. The “weeding out” must be done in love and must be done justly. You are innocent until proven guilty.*

Suspicious looks, suspicious thoughts....and looking for the bad more than the good in man will always bring sorrow...and a tearing away.

3. Something Wrong in the Fellowship...

More positives in your church than negatives...but, the negatives, the

discouraging words brought chastisement and condemnation...

William Cowper wrote: “Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?

Where is the soul refreshing view of Jesus and His Word?”

To all of us (the Church)...(Prayer): “Oh, God....Keep us on track...don’t let us fall back...don’t let us look back...Let us love and live for you!”

How do we get back to where we should be???
(Corrective Actions Necessary)

- ❖ **Remember.....that we are Christians, not atheists and hoodlums...**
Memory...the prodical son remembered (Luke 15:17)
- ❖ **Repent.....**
Big step...Repentance—admission that fault is ours and the feeling of sorrow for it.
Hardest thing about repentance....acceptance of personal responsibility for our failure.
Responsibility accepted; Godly sorrow will surely follow.
- ❖ **“Do”....Action**
Sorrow of repentance is meant to drive a man to do two (2) things:
 1. *To fling himself on the mercy of God...*
“Be merciful to me a sinner.”
 2. *To drive to action in order to bring forth fruits.*
“No man has fully repented when he continues to do the same thing over and over again.”

One other statement:

1. Listen to the Spirit of God

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Church.”

Remember....If God wanted us to talk more than listen, He would have given us two mouths and one ear.”

When you hear something, filter it through your heart...If your heart is right, the impurities will not come out of your mouth nor your deeds!

Consequence of not heeding to the Lord’s Corrective Actions (His solution to the problem).

- *The Lord will take away the church’s light in the world in which they lived.*
- *They will not be in the picture as a viable force for good and an influence for future actions by the Holy Spirit (useless as a church).*

The Challenge....

He (whosoever) that overcomes, I will give:

- The Right to Eat***
- The Tree of Life***
- Paradise of God***

God will give whosoever that overcomes the right to eat:

With God, with the saints, with his/her loved ones, with all the trimmings and perks of God’s grocery store...God’s choicest

banquet foods....Good company, good stories, laughing and gathering together with all God's children.

Tree of Life....

- In the midst of the garden was the tree of life...(Genesis 2:9)*
- It was the tree that Adam was forbidden to eat...(Genesis 2:16,17)*
- The tree whose fruit would make a man like God...and for eating which Adam and Eve were driven from Eden (Genesis 3:22-24)*
- Wisdom is the tree of life to them that lay hold of her (Proverbs 3:18)*
- The fruit of the righteous is the tree of life (Proverbs 11:30)*
- Hope fulfilled is a tree of life (Proverbs 13:12)*
- A tongue is a tree of life (Proverbs 15:4)*

The Jewish thought was that when the Messiah came and the new age dawned, the tree of life would be in the midst of men and those who had been faithful would eat of it.

- We will be like God...He shall be on His throne...and we shall know Him, sup with Him, talk to Him, love Him.*

The idea was and is that what Adam has lost, the Messiah will restore!

Paradise...

Paradise is a lovely word to describe a thing of beauty. In the Greek language...it means a pleasure garden...a serene place of beautiful smells, beautiful sights, and wonderful, glorious rest.

Although there are past theologians that believe that paradise is a place to go before going to heaven...a waiting place until heaven is set and in place for our residence, it has come to mean that heaven is going to be a paradise.

"In my Father's house are many mansions...If it were not so I would have told you so. I go to prepare a place for YOU.....Yes, for me and you!