

**TIME FOR A CHANGE:
WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR PASSION
Revelation 2:1-7**

The Righteous Brothers gave us You've Lost That Loving Feeling.

I. YOU HAVE SUCCUMBED TO A SEASON OF SPIRITUAL DRIFT.

- A. The church at Ephesus had a rich history. The church was established by Paul and he spent over two years there. Timothy was there for a season. Tradition has it the John spent the latter years of his life in Ephesus. They were a church planted in an important place. Ephesus was a commercial center – located at the intersection of a number of important trade routes. Ephesus was also a religious center with the worship of the goddess Artemis highlighted. It was here that the church was planted and flourished. The letter in Revelation acknowledged the hard work of the congregation. ¹ *“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: ² ‘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; ³ and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary.*
- B. The issue in Ephesus was not that they had become an evil, corrupt congregation. They had not embraced some nefarious strain of theology that was an embarrassment to Christendom. They were busy doing good things. They were well-versed in orthodox thought and were able to spot false teachers and heretics. In fact, that had become their trademark. Somewhere along the way, they lost their focus. Somewhere along

the way, they began to emphasize secondary matters and they neglected the primary.

- C. Spiritual drift rarely occurs purposefully. It just happens. What is the process?
 1. It begins with a neglect of the spiritual disciplines – prayer, Bible study, worship.
 2. It continues with a process of substitution – prayer, Bible study, and worship can be replaced by other things. Those other things are good, but not the best. Religious activity, family activities, hobbies, work. (More on this in the next point)
 3. Spiritual drift is exacerbated as we attempt to take care of the Lord's work in human strength.

II. YOU HAVE FILLED UP YOUR LIFE, BUT WITH THE WRONG THINGS.

- A. The process of spiritual drift can produce a life filled with activity and responsibility, but one thing is usually sorely lacking. ⁴ *'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.* There is much debate about the identity of the first love. Is it love for Christ? Is it love for other believers? It is both? Love for Christ and love for other believers are inextricably wound together. You lose one, you lose the other.
- B. Without love, everything else loses its luster. ¹ *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.* ² *If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.* ³ *And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.* All of these activities are good. They are noble. Without love, they profit nothing.

- C. What good things have you elevated to the place of supreme importance? What good things have you made your object of worship? What good things are keeping you from God's best? It isn't that we should stop doing these things. We should not neglect religious activity, family, job, hobbies, etc. They cannot be the driving force in our lives. Good people doing good things apart from the Lord can become cold and callous. They can make bad choices and justify them. They can be unrelentingly driven. They are looking for something that is not being found.

III. YOU NEED TO REPENT AND REDISCOVER.

- A. The Holy Spirit gave John clear words for this Ephesian congregation. ⁵ *'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.* Remember, repent, and rediscover – that is the prescription for this congregation.
- B. What does this mean for us?
1. We are to remember our first love for Christ. Jesus was asked about the great commandment. ³⁵ *One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,* ³⁶ *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"* ³⁷ *And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'* ³⁸ *"This is the great and foremost commandment.* ³⁹ *"The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* Matthew 22:35–39 (NASB95)
What was it like when you were willing to put Christ first in your life? What was it like when you spent time in God's word? What was it like when you prayed regularly?

- a. Baby, baby, I'd get down on my knees for you
If you would only love me like you used to do,
yeah
We had a love, a love, a love you don't find everyday
So don't, don't, don't, don't let it slip away
2. We are to repent. Things will not ever be different if we are not willing to repent. Pride and arrogance are enemies of change. We must acknowledge our sin and repent. Turn from sin and turn to Christ.
3. We must rediscover. We can't go back. But, we can begin again. You can rediscover passion for life in Christ.

You never close your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips
And there's no tenderness like before in your fingertips
You're trying hard not to show it
But baby, baby I know it
You lost that lovin' feelin'
Whoa, that lovin' feelin'
You lost that lovin' feelin'
Now it's gone, gone, gone, woh
Now there's no welcome look in your eyes when I reach for you
And now you're starting to criticize little things I do
It makes me just feel like crying
'Cause baby, something beautiful's dyin'
You lost that lovin' feelin'
Whoa, that lovin' feelin'
You lost that lovin' feelin'
Now it's gone, gone, gone, woh
Baby, baby, I'd get down on my knees for you
If you would only love me like you used to do, yeah
We had a love, a love, a love you don't find everyday
So don't, don't, don't, don't let it slip away
Baby, baby, baby, baby
I beg you please, please, please, please
I need your love, need your love
I need your love, I need your love
So bring it on back, so bring it on back
Bring it on back, bring it on back
Bring back that lovin' feelin'
Whoa, that lovin' feelin'
Bring back that lovin' feelin'
'Cause it's gone, gone, gone
And I can't go on, woh
Bring back that lovin' feelin'
Whoa, that lovin' feelin'
Bring back that lovin' feelin'
'Cause it's gone, gone, gone.