

**REturn
Pastor Bill Bowers
January 1, 2017**

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. Mark 12:29-31

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. Matthew 24:12

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Romans 12:11

Revelation 2:1-5

Today's Big Idea: Jesus challenges us to renew our first love and tells us how to do it. Let's stoke the fire!

Question: So what do you do if you've left your first love?

Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. Revelation 2:5

1. _____ the height from which you have fallen.

Remember _____.

We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19

See Mark 14

Remember _____.

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved Me and followed Me through the desert, through a land not sown." Jeremiah 2:2

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Hebrews 10:32

2. _____: turn away from _____ and turn to _____.

When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." Luke 15:17-18

_____ will make your love grow cold.

_____ can make your love grow cold.

_____ can make your love grow cold.

Revelation 3:15-18

3. _____: do the things you did at first.

We cannot not talk about the _____ of Jesus without talking about the _____ of Jesus.

Jesus' birth should cause us to _____.

Jesus' coming again should cause us to _____.

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LifeGroup and Personal Study Questions

- Jesus completes His words from Mark 12:29-31, saying, "There is no greater commandment than these." If loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is the most important thing about our faith, what resources are you committing to accomplish that commandment?
- Can you recall when you first truly committed your heart, soul, mind and strength to the purposes of Jesus? If yes, can you write or talk about it in specific detail? How did you feel? What goals did you have? How did you "hear" God? What did you think or feel about learning of Him (Bible reading, study, conversations with others about God)? Has your love or fervor (passion) for God waned in the time since you first came into relationship with Him?
- We talk often of the word, "repent," in Christendom; what does repent mean to you? Can you look up the word repent or repentance and see if it matches your personal definition? Try to find the definition of the Greek word, metanoia. How does this definition compare to what you discovered about repent/repentance?
- We heard from a passage of Scripture in Revelation (Rev 3:15-16) about being "lukewarm" in our faith. How would you describe a condition of lukewarm?
- Pastor Bill mentioned three particular things to watch for that can make our "love grow cold," He specifically named "moral compromise," "busyness," and "pride" as attitudes or actions that can be detrimental to our spiritual health. Do you agree with his naming these actions? Why or why not? If you evaluate or examine your own life in the shadow of these actions, have you or are you guilty of falling into their traps? What have you done to steer clear of them or what will you do to escape them?
- We have a number of discipleship teaching ministries in our church. We have study opportunities (Sunday classes), relationship and support ministries (LifeGroups and Wednesday Night Ministries), and spiritual formation instruction (CORE Groups). Giving thought to your own spiritual development awareness and needs, where do you think God might be leading you to be connected?

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