

## How to Restore Your First Love in Marriage

To illustrate His points, the Lord Jesus would take from our familiar life experiences and show us what He is trying to say. I would like to reverse the process if I may to use His illustration to illuminate a familiar life experience. Our Lord said in Revelation 2:4, *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*

### I. Be assured your first love is still in existence.

To revisit a point from last week’s Sunday morning sermon, we don’t lose our first love; we leave it. We know right where we left it and we will find it where we left it.

A successful young man had climbed the corporate ladder at an accelerated pace. He climbed so rapidly, he left his lovely, lonely wife behind. She was not geographically or physically left behind, she was emotionally left behind. One day, she snapped. It was as though all understanding of her identity and the people around her were gone. The young husband took her from doctor to doctor and finally an old doctor gave him some valuable advice. He said, “Son, take your young wife back to where you used to live or as close to it as possible. Find the old car you courted her in and possessed when you were first married. Whatever you were doing when your marriage was the happiest – return to doing those things. So the young man found the very same bungalow they lived in when they were first wed. There was one activity they used to do when they were first married and over time had deserted. It was a simple walk through the park. After two weeks of being in the atmosphere in which they first grew in love, she returned in sound mind and full of love for her husband. It happened while on their daily ritualistic walk in the park. While holding hands she looked at him and said, “Why, Darling, you’re here! You’re here! You’re here!” He said, “Yes, Dear, I’ve been here all along.” Love may go dormant, but if we stir things up, we’ll surely find it again. In Revelation 2:5, Jesus said to the church at Ephesus who had left the first love, to *“...do the first works...”* A good rule to follow is always do what you were doing when you fell in love. Keep the honey in the honeymoon.

Some married people act as though the fire is gone and it will never come back. Not only can our first love come back, it can come back one hundred fold if we will do the right things and wait on the Lord.

### II. Remove all rivals to your first love.

In dealing with troubled marriages I find that some pine that they have settled for a good love but not the great love. What do you do if you discover you have feelings for someone else in your past or you have met someone that makes you wonder if you missed your match?

#### A. Clarify yourself in the will of God.

Ask yourself did you seek God’s will about the person you married? Then did you act in good faith on the promise of God? If so, accept the fact that God has led you to each other. *“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”* (Proverbs 3:6). When either or both of you misbehave, those love feelings may not be functional.

#### B. Accept your marriage as an unbreakable covenant.

What do you do if you come to the conclusion that you were out of the will of God when you got

married? If you are still backslidden, ask for forgiveness and determine to live for God from this moment onward. Then no matter how hard it may sound, you must accept the person you married is the will of God for your life. Even though you don't have strong feelings for this person, God can create a great love in your heart for this person. Our Lord in His mercy will not deprive a seeking heart the fullness of His love for Him and for the person you are married to. Marriage is a covenant. *"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Mark 10:9). Should you break covenant, you may be punished by searching for your perceived great love, only to live with love just out of reach. It may become your illusive dream that never happened. God never blesses covenant breaking. When you said, "I do" at the altar, it became the will of God for your life. *"Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay"* (Ecclesiastes 5:5). Here me well on this point. I believe that God will give you a great love for the person with whom you have said synchronistic vows. If you don't find fulfillment as soon as you would wish with your spouse, you will have the pleasure of God upon you for obedience to His Word. Better to live in fellowship with God though you temporarily miss fellowship with your spouse in reciprocal union. *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Galatians 6:9).

C. Remove all bridges that may take you back in heart to another person.

There are some people you don't need to have continual conversation with on phones, cell phones, text messaging, face book, or email. Consider it over! When I have counseled couples in trouble with run-a-way feelings for someone else, I even encourage them not to say good-bye. Just disappear from their radar. Sometimes the good-byes are a one last chance to be seduced or at least to re-kindle your feelings. You may be overcome with pseudo-pity at their tears and despondency. A few times when I have seen people object to my insisting on going without good-byes, I have even volunteered to say good-bye for them. So far I have not been taken up on this, for which I am glad. Avoid communications like the plague, no matter how much it hurts. If they are going to be at a class reunion; don't go. I don't care if you did pay for non-refundable tickets. If this person works at your job, quit. Find another job. Your marriage is more important than your job or your money. *"Remove thy way far from her (or him), and come not nigh the door of her house"* (Proverbs 5:8).

### **III. Make a declaration of your first love.**

If I hear someone refer to another living person (deceased spouses not included) as their first love, I will correct them. I will quickly say you have only one first love and that is the person to whom you are married. Being first love is not necessarily the first in a list. It is the first in your heart! To be happily married to the max, it is (in my opinion) necessary to aim high for great love, shoot often and stay with it until you hit the mark. Here's my advice:

A. Think it.

*"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."* (Proverbs 23:7).

B. Pray for the gift.

God's love is a true gift. He gave it to us in unconditional packaging. It is eternal in quality for He said, *"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee"* (Jeremiah 31:3). *"We love him, because he first loved us"* (I John 4:19). If we are not loving our spouse with preeminence, let us pray for first love and that it will be reciprocated. Here is a prayer I would urge you to pray: "Lord I know you love (name them) ten thousand more times than I could ever love. My love is not good enough. I need to love them with your agape, God's kind of love. Therefore, will you love (name them) through me, the way they need to be

loved? Oh God, let me be a clear expression of your love to them.

C. Speak it.

*“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* (Proverbs 18:21).

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Ephesians 4:31). *“Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things”* (Proverbs 23:16). You were made in the image of God. He spoke the worlds into existence. Speak to others of your first love. Speak with affirmation your love, your spouse, who, next to your Lord, takes first place in your heart. In a sense, we may, under God, speak our world of love into existence with our spouse. Leading Christian counselors say we can love whom we want to love. Allow me to go a step further - you may, with God’s help, make your wife or husband your first love, if you want to.

- Pastor Pope -

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