



## Return to Your First Love Robert Morris

**Focus** In the book of Revelation, Jesus tells the church at Ephesus they have left their first love. He then counsels them to repent and do the things they did at first. When we first turn from our sin and surrender our lives to Christ, we spend time with God by worshipping Him and reading the Bible. We also share what God has done for us with others. The way we return to our first love is by returning to our “first works”—worship, the Word, and witnessing.

**Fun** Would you rather spend a week doing math problems or book reports?

**Review** Key Scriptures: Revelation 2:4–5; 1:11

### 1. **Worship**

All of the letters written to the seven churches in the book of Revelation include commendation, correction, and counsel. The churches are like lampstands that hold the light of Jesus. When Jesus speaks to the church at Ephesus, He tells them they have left their first love and need to repent and do the first works. The first works are the things you did when you first got saved and wanted to spend time with Jesus. Worship is all about God’s presence and spending time with Him. Praise and prayer are the most important ways to cultivate a personal relationship with God.

### 2. **Word**

Another way to return to your first love is to spend time in God’s Word, like Jesus encouraged the church at Ephesus to do. Reading the Bible is like eating a nutritious meal for your soul. Sometimes people can look at a passage of Scripture and think they don’t need to read it because they’ve read it before. This is like saying you aren’t going to eat a meal because you’ve eaten that type

of food before. Your soul needs nutrition, and reading the Bible is the way to give your soul the nutrients it needs.

### **3. Witness**

When we first get saved, we are so excited about the new revelation that God loves us and our sins have been forgiven that we continually share it with others! We don't need to tell the "Romans Road" to every person we meet, but we do want to be sincere about bringing God into conversations and sharing what He has done for us. We are called to be rivers, not reservoirs. When we worship and read the Word, it is like water coming into our lives. When we witness, it is like water flowing out. If we don't have water coming in and flowing out, we can become stagnant. We return to our first love by spending time with God and telling others about Him.

**\*Group Dynamics Idea\*** Gateway Church is partnering with World Relief to provide welcome kits for Afghan refugees and their families. Many were forced to leave their homes with little to no personal belongings. A tangible way we can show God's love is to provide kits with basic supplies—this is a great way for your group to come together and help. Consider having a night where everyone brings in supplies they've purchased, and spend time packing kits together. Serving others can be a great bonding experience for your group!

### **Discuss**

1. When you first got saved, what aspects of spending time with God were you most excited about? What did your worship and prayer time look like?
2. Did you talk to others about God when you first became a Christian? Who did you share with and what did you tell them?
3. Read Revelation 2:1–7. What stands out to you in this passage? How would you feel if Jesus was saying this specifically to you?
4. What are some reasons people can leave their first love? How can the normal busyness of life cause us to become distant from God?
5. What is the difference between witnessing in a way that can turn people away from God's love versus witnessing in a way that draws people to God's love?
6. What area of your life is the strongest: worship, the Word, or witnessing? Which area could use some improvement?

7. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?

### Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Worship God and spend time with Him in prayer.
- Be faithful to read the Word which nourishes your soul.
- Witness to others and share what God has done for you.

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, please forgive us for the ways we have left our first love. Give us grace to return to doing the things we did when we first got saved. Help us to spend time in worship and read Your Word. Give us boldness to witness and tell others about what You've done for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**\*New Leader Tip\*** As a leader, it is important to know your strengths and weaknesses. If you've never taken the *StrengthsFinder* test, it's a good resource to help you learn your strengths and become sharper as a leader. Also, knowing your weaknesses is good because it keeps you humble, reminds you that you need others and their strengths, and shows you areas to improve. One key to being a good leader is to continue growing.