

God's Greatest Desire

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In Hebrews 2:1-4 we have a couple of nautical terms which describe a diminishing faith in Christ Jesus which is caused by the simple neglect of one's salvation; a slow, drifting away from paying attention to the truth of God's word. Going undetected this slow fade, in the end, can lead to the shipwreck of one's faith.

Spiritual neglect leads to spiritual weakness and vulnerabilities where the enemy can attack with great effectiveness. He is like a hungry lion seeking one to devour.

The church in Ephesus persevered in their labors; they protected their congregation from evil men; they exposed false apostles, and they weren't tossed to and from by every wind of doctrine. However, Jesus had something against them.

Revelation 2:4–5 ⁴ “You have left your first love (for Christ and one another). 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.

To remove their lampstand was to take from them the keys to the kingdom of heaven. No longer would they have heaven's authority with them on earth. They would lose their privileges as ambassadors for Christ.

The Hebrews we're in danger of drifting away from the truth of God's word, and the Ephesians were in danger because they had drifted away from the most important thing – love; their love for Christ and their love for each other.

1 Corinthians 13:1–2; 13 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. ¹³ But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Our Love for Jesus and each other must be maintained. We must be diligent to preserve our unity in the Spirit. We must guard our hearts and minds from all that would draw us away from our love and devotion to Christ and His church. Our hearts must remain pure toward God. Love must be the essence of all we do.

- The love that purchased the church.

Ephesians 5:25–27 ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

The church is pictured in the bible as the bride of Christ. The one He loved so much that He gave His life for her. He gave His life for Her to sanctify her or to make her holy; to set her apart from the world to be completely devoted to Him; forsaking all for Christ.

There is an old Jewish wedding custom in which, when the ring is given, the bridegroom says to the bride: “Behold, thou art sanctified to me.”

Many today desire the benefits of a marriage to Christ, but they don't want to wear the wedding band. As the great detective Sherlock Holmes would say to his trusted companion, "Its elementary my dear Watson," You cannot serve two masters.

- Living in a seductress world.

James 4:4 ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15–17 ¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

- Abandoning God

Deuteronomy 32:15–20 (The Living Bible, Paraphrased)

¹⁵ But Israel was soon overfed; Yes, fat and bloated; Then, in plenty, they forsook their God. They shrugged away the Rock of their salvation. ¹⁶ Israel began to follow foreign gods, And Jehovah was very angry; He was jealous of his people. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to heathen gods, To new gods never before worshiped. ¹⁸ They spurned the Rock who had made them, Forgetting it was God who had given them birth. ¹⁹ God saw what they were doing and detested them! His sons and daughters were insulting him. ²⁰ He said, 'I will abandon them; See what happens to them then! For they are a stubborn, faithless generation.

Examining Our Hearts

Peter, and apostle of Jesus Christ, writes, "It's time for judgment to begin with the household of God." We can agree to the lost condition of the world, but what's the status of our own home – our own life?

Jesus gave us the greatest two commandments.

Luke 10:27 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

These two commands undergird every other command given to us from the word of God.

God's plea:

To the church at Ephesus and to us today, Jesus says to repent; to turn our hearts back to Him - back to God.

To the adulteress heart, James instructs, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

To obey these words today will require a radical change in your life. God is asking for nothing less than to give our all to Him.

The eternal, almighty and sovereign God, creator of all things, desires to be your all in all!