



NO LIMITS

WITH PASTOR DELMAN



AFTER THE
Love
HAS LOST ITS
Shine

S E R M O N G U I D E

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After The Love Has Lost Its Shine

Revelation 2:1-5

INTRODUCTION

There is a story about a woman who kept a lamp burning in her window. When she first lit it, the flame was bright enough to guide a weary traveler home. But she became so enamored with the light that she stopped trimming the wick and pouring in the oil. She admired the shine without realizing the light was growing dim. The shine was never the source, only a reflection of something deeper. Because she did not pay attention to the source, she lost the shine. This is the feeling R&B artist Regina Belle captured when she asked, “What do you do after the love has lost its shine?”

Every relationship eventually meets the morning after the butterflies wear off and the text messages slow down. Life has a way of wearing on love. The question is never whether the shine will fade, it will. The question is whether there was ever anything of substance underneath it. This is exactly what Jesus addresses in the church at Ephesus. They had incredible zeal, but under the pressure of the Roman Empire and false teachers, the passion they once had began to fade. This passage offers timeless principles for rekindling love that has lost its shine, not just with God, but in all our most important relationships.

KEY POINTS

1. Acknowledge The Good That Is Being Done

Before Jesus shares his concern with the church in Ephesus, he takes time to connect with them by acknowledging their good works. Three times he says, “I know.” He offers recognition for their works, appreciation for their toil, and affirmation for their endurance. Before he critiques what is broken, he celebrates what is working. This is a profound model for us. If we want to rekindle love, we must be mature enough to identify what we appreciate and acknowledge what is working. The deepest hunger of the human heart is to be seen and noticed. When sacrifice goes un-saluted and effort goes unnoticed, something in us begins to shut down. Love that gets acknowledged gets activated, but love that gets ignored gets exhausted.

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2. Pay Attention To The Little Things

Jesus' primary concern is not that the Ephesians lost their works, but that they "abandoned the love you had at first." They let the warmth that once accompanied their work go. Relationships rarely go cold because of one dramatic event. More often, it is a slow leak, a gradual erosion caused by the accumulation of small things we ignore. The Song of Solomon warns against the "little foxes, that spoil the vineyards." The threat is not always a lion or a bear, but the small, seemingly harmless things that slip in undetected. Sarcastic comments, a refusal to apologize, or a lack of gratitude can chip away at the foundation of a relationship. We fight the lions but often let the little foxes run free.

3. Recognize That It Is Not Too Late To Turn Things Around

The good news is that the diagnosis is not a death sentence. Jesus provides a clear, three-part prescription for restoration: Remember, Repent, and Repeat. He commands them to "Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first." A flickering flame can still be revived. This process begins by looking back, not to live in the past, but to recover what the past knew that the present has forgotten. It requires repentance, a change in direction, to become as emotionally present as we are physically present. Finally, it demands that we repeat the actions that sparked the loving feeling in the first place, because feelings often follow actions.

Repentance means turning around. For many, this means turning away from distraction and turning toward connection. You can be present in body but absent in spirit, and this is one of the greatest threats to a relationship. When your loved one is talking, put the phone away. Look them in the eye. Ask a follow up question. Learn to say, "Tell me more," or "I did not know you were carrying that." Your partner, your child, and your friends do not just want access to your body, they deserve your full attention. Being emotionally present is an act of love that says, "You matter to me."

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Dr. John Gottman's research suggests a five-to-one ratio of positive to negative interactions is key for a healthy relationship. In what practical ways can you build up your partner, friend, or family member this week to acknowledge the good they do?
2. The sermon warns against the “little foxes” that spoil relationships, such as sarcastic comments or a refusal to apologize. What is one “little fox” you have allowed to run free in a key relationship, and what step can you take to address it?
3. Jesus commands the church to “remember, repent, and do the works you did at first.” What is one action or practice from the beginning of a relationship, with God or another person, that you can intentionally repeat this week to help rekindle the connection?
