

**JESUS' R\_\_\_\_\_ TO THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS (REV. 2:4)**

The Ephesian Christians left their first love.

*"A church has no reason for being a church when she has no love within her heart, or when that love grows cold. Lose love, lose all."* (Charles Spurgeon)

The Ephesian Christians were passionate about truth at the expense of grace. When truth absent of grace then legalism emerges. Conversely, when grace is advocated at the expense of truth then liberalism emerges.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the combination of grace and truth.

**JESUS' R\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS (REV. 2:5)**

To recover love, Jesus says ...

R\_\_\_\_\_

R\_\_\_\_\_

Do!

**JESUS' R\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS (REV. 2:7)**

Win with love and eat from the fruit of the tree of life.

**REFLECTION:**

1. Are you like the Ephesian Christians?
2. Are you like the Nicolaitians?
3. What tree are you running to for freedom?

*Message given by Brandon Grant, Lead Pastor of Rise City Church*

**www.risecitychurch.com**

**IT MATTERS NOW**

**"Winning With Love – The Letter to the Ephesians"**

**WALKING IN REVELATION**

The 7 letters written to the 7 churches in chapters 2-3 of Revelation were at one time real churches with real people in real places.

The ancient ruins of Ephesus took my breath away.

*Revelation 2:1-7*

**UNDERSTANDING ANCIENT EPHESUS**

The City:

The Temple:

The Pillars:

The Palms:

The Goddess:

**JESUS' R\_\_\_\_\_ OF THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS (REV. 2:1-3, 6)**

Hard Work - Did what was right in a persecuting and pagan culture

Patient Endurance – Kept going strong while awaiting Christ's return.

Didn't tolerate evil people – Preserved doctrinal purity

Patiently suffered without quitting – Never gave up in difficult times.

Hate practices of the Nicolaitians – Didn't compromise with the culture

## IT MATTERS NOW // Winning With Love; The Letter to the Ephesians

Passage: Revelation 2:1-7      Date: Sunday 9/18/2016

### Sermon Based Life Group Materials

#### FOR STARTERS

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As a child, what was one lesson you were taught by an adult for which you are most grateful today?

#### QUICK REVIEW

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The Ephesians church was initially known for their love for God and others and yet found themselves becoming more and more unloving – thus a warning from Jesus. The Ephesian Christians were hard workers that were deeply committed to Jesus. They didn't comprise with the culture and deviant actions around them. They did not take faith lightly. Some might consider them passionate about the things of God. So what went wrong and why does it matter now? As followers of Jesus it can become tempting to be more interested in being right, then being loving and extending grace to others.

#### STUDY & SHARE

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1. Take a few minutes to read through Revelations 2:1-7.
  - a. What are the characteristics that God acknowledges as good about the church in Ephesus (verses 1-3)?
  - b. Of those characteristics mentioned, which ones do you recognize in your own relationship with God? Which ones are missing?
2. Revelations 2:4 says, "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."
  - a. What was Jesus warning them about? What was at stake if they did not listen and change?
3. Read Ephesians 1:15-16
  - a. How did Paul describe the Ephesian church?
  - b. How is loving others related to loving God?
  - c. In what ways have you replaced loving and being with God, with

doing for God?

4. Jesus calls them to remember (or consider), repent and return.
  - a. Spend a few quiet moments... reflect on the times and circumstances in your life when you first trusted Jesus. What things did you most love and enjoy about Jesus and your relationship with Him?
  - b. Then, consider what things are different for you today in your relationship with Jesus. Are you more like the Ephesians or like the Nicolaitans?
  - c. What tree are you running to for freedom?
  - d. To "repent" means to stop and change direction. What attitudes or behaviors might God be calling you to repent from and what is He calling you to do in response?
  - e. Jesus calls them to return to the things they did at first. What things do you need to return to in order to reignite your love and passion for Jesus?
5. Revelations 2:7 describe a promise for those who hear the word of God and respond. What is the promise and how can you apply that your life today?

#### GROUP CHALLENGE

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What are some practical, or even spiritual things, you could do together as a group to help increase your love for Jesus? Be creative and have fun!

#### FOR PRAYER

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Pray for each other in response to this week's message and life group discussion. Ask God to help you remember, repent and return. Pray that Rise City Church would be and become a more loving and life-giving church.

#### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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What did you find most interesting about this week's message?  
What didn't make sense, that you would like some clarity about?