

COMMIT TO MEMORY

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. - Revelation 2:5

CONSIDER

The first church addressed in our study on overcomers is the church at Ephesus. In many ways you could say that Ephesus Bible Fellowship had a lot going on. They were doing many things right. However, there was one thing they were not doing well at all. Jesus tells us what it is in verse 4, “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” You can’t get any more straightforward than that: They had left their first love.

If you or I are going to live as overcomers in our daily lives, God must not only be loved by us but He must be loved first. The issue with Ephesus was not that they no longer loved God at all. It was that they no longer loved Him first. He was no longer their priority.

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CONNECT

Remember to always open your group time together in prayer. Invite God's Spirit to manifest Himself fully in your midst, to soften your hearts and open your ears to His Word as well as to guard your lips—seasoning each person's speech as with salt. Keep specific prayer requests to be covered at the end of the meeting, if possible. This is a time to connect with each other and to connect with God as we open our time together.

Share your responses to these questions as you open up your time of connection.

Describe the difference between a spiritual relationship with God and a ritual?

Spend a few minutes sharing about your history or struggles with the area of legalism, and if the Lord has set you free, describe that process. If you are not free, ask for prayer from others to be set free in this area in your life.

Are there any specific needs you are bringing to the study this week? Allow those who are willing to share these the opportunity to share.

After this preliminary connecting time is completed, watch the DVD teaching by Pastor Evans on this session. Next, have someone read the discussion questions in the Concentrate section and guide the discussion.

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CONCENTRATE

Use the following questions and Scripture passages to guide your discussion of the teaching you just experienced from Pastor Evans and the discussion from your group members.

1. Read Revelation 2:1-7. What are some of the things the people at the church of Ephesus had done well?

Where had the church of Ephesus fallen from?

2. What three things did Pastor Evans mention from this passage that the church of Ephesus was asked to do?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3. Give a tangible example of each of these three steps Christ called the church at Ephesus to do.

In what ways could these three steps enhance the things they were already doing for the Lord?

Notes

(Use this space for personal notes on the lesson and discussion.)

CONVERGE

“be doers of the Word,
not just hearers”
- JAMES 1:22

In this section, talk with the group about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Describe a time in your life where it was obvious to you that you had left your first love in your relationship with God? What brought this to your attention, and how did you address it?
2. In the video teaching, Pastor Evans describes what those who overcome will enjoy based on this message to the church at Ephesus. Share what they will inherit.

Have you ever experienced God in such a personal, intimate way that you are willing to share about it with the group?

Or have you witnessed someone with this kind of personal relationship with the Lord?

3. Read Matthew 22:37. Provide practical examples of what it means to live out this verse in your daily life. Give time for several people to answer, and use their answers as a way of encouraging your own walk and opening up your own mind to ways of deepening your relationship with God.

To close your time together, spend some time worshiping God together—praying, singing and reading Scripture. Use the *Prayer and Praise Report* to keep track of how God answers prayer.

Focusing on
practical
applications of
what we've
learned in this
lesson in
order to better
align our life
choices with
God's truth
and will.

CONTINUE

Rest, and allow the Lord to lead you as you seek Him through His Word.

The following section is for you to use personally on your own as you continue in the week's topic throughout the next few days. Pray and ask the Lord to open your ears to truly hear His truth and apply it in your life. If you want to, feel free to write what you learn in the margins or in the Notes section of this week's lesson.

Day 1

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. - DEUTERONOMY 6:5

REFLECT:

In what areas of your life do you find competition for putting God first?

Are you willing to repent of the things you put before God and ask Him to help you put Him in His rightful place in your life?

What are some practical things you can do (or not do) that will demonstrate this position of loving God with all your heart, soul and might? Will you commit to doing these things this week?

Day 2

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. - MATTHEW 6:33

REFLECT:

What does it mean to seek God's kingdom and righteousness?

List some of the things in the "all these things" that you are desiring God to add to your life.

Are you willing to put all of your eggs in one basket by putting God first and trusting that He will provide all of your needs even, and especially, when you don't put those needs ahead of Him? Name something you can do (or not do) this week to demonstrate this willingness?

Day 3

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. - JOHN 15:5

REFLECT:

What does it mean to abide in Christ?

What is the result of this abiding? What is the result of a lack of abiding?

In what way can abiding in Jesus help you to overcome some of the challenges you are presently facing? Are you willing to commit to abiding in Christ at an even greater level than you currently do or have ever done? Pray and ask Him to give you wisdom on how to do this right now.

Day 4

and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. - 2 CORINTHIANS 8:5

REFLECT:

What does it look like to give yourself to the Lord?

In what way does giving yourself to the Lord often spill over into giving yourself to others?

Are you willing to increase the amount of your time, talents and treasures—and also your thoughts—that you give to the Lord and, consequently, to others? Start by taking practical steps toward that commitment this week.

Day 5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? - REVELATION 1:14

REFLECT:

What do you think it means to remove your lampstand out of its place?

Take some time to remember the time in your life when you were most intimate with God? If that time is not now, also take some time to repent of falling away from Him. Ask yourself if you are willing to return to Him and place Him first in your life in every area?

Pray and ask God to reveal to you where He is not first in your life. As He brings these thoughts to your mind, ask Him for the strength and wisdom to put Him first.