

# Do You Care?

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 571–572.



*Leap*  
of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



## Revelation 2:1–7 (NKJV)

1 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

# Ephesus, the Careless Church

(Rev. 2:1–7)

Each of the seven messages begins with a personal description or designation of Jesus Christ taken from the vision of Christ given in Revelation 1. *(In the case of Ephesus, see Rev. 1:12, 16, 20.)*

The Ephesian assembly had enjoyed some “stellar” leadership—Paul, Timothy, and the Apostle John himself—but the Lord reminded them that *He* was in control of the ministry, placing the “stars” where He pleased.

# Ephesus, the Careless Church

(Rev. 2:1–7)

How easy it is for a church to become proud and forget that pastors and teachers are God's gifts *(Eph. 4:11)* who may be taken away at any time. Some churches need to be cautioned to worship the Lord and not their pastor!

## **Revelation 2:2–3** (NKJV)

2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;  
3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

## **Revelation 2:6** (NKJV)

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

# Approval

(vv. 2–3, 6)

How gracious of the Lord to not start with words of commendation! To begin with, this was a *serving* church, busy doing the works of the Lord. No doubt their weekly schedule was filled with activities.

It was also a *sacrificing* church, for the word *labor* means “toil to the point of exhaustion.” The Ephesian Christians paid a price to serve the Lord. They were a *steadfast* assembly, for the word *patience* carries the meaning of “endurance under trial.” They kept going when the going was tough.

The Ephesian church was a *separated* people, for they carefully examined the visiting ministers to see if they were genuine.



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1





## 2 John 7–11 (NKJV)

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would come in from the outside and even arise from within the church:



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



## **Acts 20:28–31** (NKJV)

28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

John had instructed them to “try the spirits”.



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



# 1 John 4:1–6 (NKJV)

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Indeed, Satan has his false ministers and the church must be constantly alert to detect them and reject them:



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1





## 2 Corinthians 11:1–4 (NKJV)

1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.

2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

## 2 Corinthians 11:12–15 (NKJV)

12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Ephesian Christians separated themselves not only from false doctrine but also from false deeds (Rev. 2:6). The word *Nicolaitan* means “to conquer the people.”

Some Bible students believe this was a sect who “lorded it over” the church and robbed the people of their liberty in Christ (see 3 John 9–11).

All God's people are "kings and priests":

## **1 Peter 2:9** (NKJV)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

## **Revelation 1:6** (NKJV)

and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



Have equal access to the Father through the blood of Christ.

## **Hebrews 10:19** (NKJV)

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

The believers at Ephesus were a *suffering* people who patiently bore their burdens and toiled without fainting, and they did all of this for His name's sake! No matter how you examine this congregation, you conclude that it is just about perfect.

However, the One among the lampstands saw into their hearts, and He had a different diagnosis from ours.

# Accusation

(v. 4)

## Revelation 2:4 (NKJV)

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

This busy, separated, sacrificing church really suffered from “heart trouble”—they had abandoned their first love!

They displayed “works... labor... and patience” (*Rev. 2:2*), but these qualities were not motivated by a love for Christ.

## 1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

*(work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope.)* What we do for the Lord is important, *but so is why we do it!*



What is “first love”? It is the devotion to Christ that so often characterizes the new believer: fervent, personal, uninhibited, excited, and openly displayed. It is the “honeymoon love” of the husband and wife.

## Jeremiah 2:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 “Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown.

While it is true that mature married love deepens and grows richer, it is also true that it should never lose the excitement and wonder of those “honeymoon days.” When a husband and wife begin to take each other for granted, and life becomes routine, then the marriage is in danger.

Just think of it: it is possible to serve, sacrifice, and suffer *“for My name’s sake”* and yet not really love Jesus Christ!

The Ephesian believers were so busy maintaining their separation that they were neglecting adoration. Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion. The church must have both if it is to please Him.

By reading Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, you discover at least twenty references to *love*. You also discover that Paul emphasized the believer's exalted position "in Christ ... in the heavenly places." But the Ephesian church had fallen and was not living up to its heavenly position in Christ (*Rev. 2:5*).

It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve Him faithfully. Our love for Him must be pure.

## **Ephesians 6:24** (NKJV)

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

## Revelation 2:5–7 (NKJV)

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

# Admonition

(vv. 5–7)

“First love” can be restored if we follow the three instructions Christ gave. First, we must *remember* (*literally “keep on remembering”*) what we have lost and cultivate a desire to regain that close communion once again.

Then we must *repent*—change our minds—and confess our sins to the Lord (*1 John 1:9*).

Third, we must *repeat the first works*, which suggests restoring the original fellowship that was broken by our sin and neglect. For the believer, this means prayer, Bible reading and meditation, obedient service, and worship.

# Admonition

(vv. 5–7)

In spite of the privileges it had enjoyed, the church of Ephesus was in danger of losing its light! The church that loses its love will soon lose its light, no matter how doctrinally sound it may be.

“I will come” ([Rev. 2:5](#)) is not referring to the Lord’s return, but to His coming judgment *then and there*. The glorious city of Ephesus is today but a heap of stones and no light is shining there.

Revelation 2:7 makes it clear that individual believers within the church may be true to the Lord, no matter what others may do. In these seven messages, the “overcomers” are not a “spiritual elite,” but rather the true believers whose faith has given them victory *(1 John 5:4–5)*.



Sinful man was banned from the tree of life, but in Christ we have eternal abundant life (John 3:16; 10:10).



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



## **Galatians 3:22–24** (NKJV)

22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

## **John 3:16** (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

## **John 10:10** (NKJV)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

# Do You Care?

We enjoy this blessing now, and we shall enjoy it in greater measure in eternity.



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



## **Revelation 22:1–5 (NKJV)**

**1** And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

**2** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

**3** And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

**4** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

**5** There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

# Do You Care?

The church of Ephesus was the “careless church,” made up of careless believers who neglected their love for Christ. Are we guilty of the same neglect?



*Leap* of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1

