

First Love  
Revelation 2:1-7

What is it that helps the Church stand firm in its mission?

1. What Jesus sees in the Church: In working hard to keep the faith, the church in Ephesus left the relationship behind.
  - Jesus sees their hard work: They kept the doctrine, and they stayed determined.
  - Jesus sees their hearts: They left their first love.

*Correct doctrine and sheer determination are empty without love.*

2. What Jesus wants for the Church: Return to their first loving pursuit.
  - Think back to the beginning
  - Turn back to Christ

*Take Home Truth: We will stand firm only when we are walking with Christ in loving pursuit of Christ.*

*Yet, our love for Christ is warmed at the fire of His love for us.*

## LifeGroup Questions Elyria: Applying the Teaching to Our Lives

- Icebreaker: What is one thing from your childhood that you wish would become popular again?
- Share one thing that stood out to you from the sermon. Why did that stand out?
- Imagine that your walk with Christ is like canoeing down a river. In a few words, how is it going right now? Are you pacing yourself? Is the current running strong? Have you begun to coast? Have you run aground on the bank? Are you taking a nap in the canoe? How is the journey going?
- We often hear that the Christian life is a marathon, and not a sprint. In your own words, what does this mean? What is helpful about this analogy? What can be dangerous about this analogy?
- Our love for Christ is one thing that helps us to stand firm and continue to shine the light of Christ. What makes love so important in the midst of great difficulty?
- First love is characterized by sincere, pure devotion (2 Corinthians 13:2-3). Is there anything that has distracted you from your devotion to Christ in the past? What happened as a result? Is there anything that is distracting you right now?
- In order to return to their first love, Jesus tells the church to remember (think back), and to repent (turn back).
- Think back: What was it like at first? Is there anything that you've lost in your relationship with Christ? Is there anything that used to come naturally and now feels stale?
- Turn back: Is there anything that you sense Jesus wants you to return to?