

# Recapturing your first love

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LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—Do you remember what it was like when you first realized you were in love? Do you remember what it was like to walk hand in hand on a cool spring evening sharing your hopes and dreams, looking forward to the future with excitement and perhaps a bit of trepidation?

But the years go by and the monotony of daily living often dulls that first excitement. The flush of first love gets buried in the world of earning a living and building a life. The petty annoyances of life can steal our joy, and it's hard to get it back.

Our lives as Christians can be that way too. I get reminded of this every time I meet people who are new to the faith. So often they virtually bubble over with joy and eagerness. The Word of God is a grand new adventure, and no amount of study is too much, no sacrifice too great.

But with time that first love can wane. The excitement is gone, family and neighbors reject the message, we sin and disappoint ourselves and our heavenly Father. We become disillusioned with other Christians, and we sink into the rituals of the faith without recognizing our slow slide into mediocrity.

We don't know where the feeling's gone, and we just can't get it back.

In the 1st century there was a church in Ephesus. This was a strong, solid congregation. They knew God and his Word. No one could deceive them, although many apparently tried. But this church had a problem. The passion of the newness had waned decades in the past. They had lost their first love (Revelation 2:1-4).

Jesus was not about to let them drift into an oblivious comfort zone without first giving them an instruction or two on how to get it back. He offers a three-point plan to recapture the first love, and it works, whether it be the love of your life or your love of the Lord. You'll find it in Revelation 2:5.

■ Remember. Recall what it was like at the beginning. Remember the things you did and the joy you had while doing them. Recall the excitement of the

early days. Once you have grasped again that elation of those days, go the step 2.

■ Repent. Admit that you have left the course. Admit it to God and your loved ones. Make a determined effort to turn around, change your current patterns of behavior and begin to do what you did in the beginning.

■ Do. Do those things that you did in the beginning. Attitudes often follow action. Remembering and repenting are good, but they aren't enough. Go back and do the things that matter. Take those walks in the park again. Share the special times. Recapture the excitement of learning and growing. Show the extra respect. Be on your best behavior.

First love: It really is more wonderful the second time around.