

# Revelation Truth and Love Revelation 2:1-7

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / April 19, 2026*

## I. You Might Be Working Hard and Still Believe All the Right Things

**Revelation 2:2-3** “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for My name’s sake, and you have not grown weary.”

You’d think He would do nothing but commend them because a church “health assessment” would show them crushing it in so many important areas. They were working hard, they knew how to endure and stand up under hard stuff, they had discernment and were not sucked into heresy or false teaching, and they knew how to be patient with people who are difficult.

They weren’t spiritually lazy or sloppy with their doctrine. We live in a day now where both these things are huge problems.

And as serious as those two problems are, Jesus was worked up about something else because He wants us to know that just being active and zealous for truth is not enough!

## II. You’ve Abandoned Your First Love

**Revelation 2:4** “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”

Jesus chose strong words right here, because the word abandoned means forsaken, deserted, or recklessly tossed aside. In other words, it was intentional. They didn’t just lose their first love, they left it.

**Revelation 2:4** “But I have this against you...”

Jesus says, “I have this against you...” because this is what matters most. In fact, if you don’t have this, it diminishes, nullifies, erodes, and weakens everything else you do have.

**Matthew 22:37-40** “...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

### A. You’re Cold Toward Me (Jesus)

Jesus knew where they started 40 years earlier when Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, and the apostle Paul had first preached the Good News of Jesus and the Gospel, so that so many people responded with love and zeal for Jesus, that the Temple of Artemis “idol craftsmen union” rose up and rioted.

The first love for Jesus was so bold, so radical, and so extravagant that it impacted the community and the economy. People weren’t buying idols!

First love is attentive, eager, extravagant, and always has time for the beloved because it makes time for the beloved.

Jesus wants that first love to be your forever love for Him! And so, He says, “You’ve lost the attentiveness, tenderness, affection, and extravagance of your first love because you hardly make any time for Me.”

Christianity is bigger than a creed or a list of doctrinal statements you believe. It’s a relationship with Jesus Christ. He expects it to be vibrant, heartfelt, and passionate.

They were still orthodox, correct, and believed all the right things, but they had become cold, apathetic, formal, and indifferent.

“People can have all kinds of information in their head. They can score 100% on a systematic theology exam. The devil could make an A+ on a theology exam, all the while his heart is alienated from Christ and the things of God.”

- R.C. Sproul

**2 Corinthians 11:3** “... I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

“A man or woman is first united with the Christian church because of having discovered and believed in Jesus Christ and His love...[but] after a few years of being a Christian that first love has been replaced while perhaps no one was aware of the replacement. The first love has been abandoned, and in its place is the starchy, high-cholesterol diet of activity and church work that will never nourish the human soul...the Christian becomes totally preoccupied, fascinated with themes and goals that would have never won him or her in the first place to have joined the church. Arguments over fine doctrinal points, distinctions of polity, exoteric giftedness, etc. It happens to marriages. It happens to human friendships. It happens to the life of discipleship.”

- Earl Palmer, *1,2,3, John, Revelation*

## B. You’re Cold Toward Other People

The world is very broken. It’s gotten scarier, more chaotic, and overwhelming, but that’s when Christian love stands out the most. If we lose that, we look and sound just like everybody else.

- What about you? Have you become unloving, suspicious, overly critical, condemning, tribal, narrow, and harsh? Are you spring-loaded to critique, correct, criticize, find fault, and cancel people out of your life? Have you become thin-skinned, irritable, easily angered, and triggered by everything?

That’s not the heart of Jesus! He calls us to be more than “Truth Junkies.” He’s calls us to be compassionate just like He was and just like He is right now toward you.

The problem Jesus is talking about can happen in a marriage, in friendships, and in church families who just settle into duty, obligation, and busyness, while the spark of love is gone!

“Noel and I are rock solid in our commitment to each other, and there is no whiff of unfaithfulness on either side. But, as I told the elders, ‘Rock solid is not always an emotionally satisfying metaphor, especially to a woman. A rock is not the best image of a woman’s tender companion.’ In other words, the precious garden of my home needs tending.”

- John Piper

- What about you? Never mind how much you know and how fast you’re moving, even if you’re doing stuff for God. Do you have intimacy and delight in your relationship with Jesus and your relationship with others?

If not, He would say, “I have this against you, that you’ve forsaken your first love.”

### III. Let’s Do What Jesus Says to Do

**Revelation 2:5** “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”

#### A. Remember

Jesus is saying, “Remember when you used to love to be with Me, get up early to spend time with Me, pray easily, freely, and often like you were talking to a friend, and have thoughts about Me all through the day.”

#### B. Repent

Repentance is a change of mind that’s strong enough that it changes the direction of your life. Maybe today needs to be the day that you change your mind about being ok with just ok.

#### C. Re-Do

Consider things that you used to do when you had more affection for Him and others that you’ve let go of, and start doing them again.