

## Your First Love

*“But I have this against you,  
that you have left your first love.”  
Revelations 2:4.*

Have you left your first love? Who is your first love? Is your baby, your child, or your husband your first love? Who is really first in your life? “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” Matt. 10:37. The Scripture in Revelation says: “But I have this against you, that you have left your **first love**.” Rev. 2:4.

**Dirty rags.** Ask yourself these questions. Are the things that you put first of eternal value? Will what you do today help to increase His kingdom? Do you seek after His righteousness? Remember, our righteousness is like **dirty rags**. (Is. 64:6)

**What is our Lord saying to us?** He is saying that any time we put someone or something ahead of our love for or our relationship with Him, we are not worthy of His love.

**Seek first.** We are to put Him first in our priorities; first in our day and first in our heart. “But **seek first** His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33.

**What happens when you put someone ahead of the Lord?** What does He do to draw you back to Him? Some of us put our husbands first, and the Lord took our husbands from us! “Thou hast removed my acquaintances far from me; Thou hast made me an object of loathing to them. Thou has removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness.” Ps. 8:18-88.

**Does this mean we are not to care for our husband's needs?** Are we to have the attitude that “we serve the Lord, not you”? God has a perfect balance that He teaches in the following Scriptures: “Wives, be subject unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord**.” Eph. 5:22. And also, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, **as is fitting to the Lord**.” Col. 3:18. We submit to our husbands **because** we love the Lord. Many times our husbands may not be deserving of our devoted submission; nevertheless, our Lord always deserves submission to His Word!

**That the Word of God may not be blasphemed.** The Lord even gives us a warning that not obeying or not honoring our husbands will dishonor, even blaspheme, the Lord and His Word! The balance is to honor the Lord by obeying and being submissive to our own husbands. “...being subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be dishonored.” Titus 2:5. “...being subject to their own husbands, that the **Word of God may not be blasphemed**.” Titus 2:5 KJV.

**Pleasing to the Lord.** We are to try to please the Lord, rather than trying to please our husbands; then the Lord will cause us to have favor with our husbands. “When a man’s ways are **pleasing to the Lord**, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Prov. 16:7. “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” Prov. 31:30. “Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Ps. 37:4.

## Obedience Rather Than Sacrifice

**To obey is better than sacrifice.** “Behold, to **obey is better than sacrifice**, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, He has also rejected you...” 1Sam. 15:22-23. “To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord rather than sacrifice.” Prov. 21:3.

**Testimony:** I have seen many women who are “martyrs” and I was always afraid that I would become one. Since I didn't know why or how other women had become that way, it was possible that I, too, would fall into the same trap. And I did. But now I have found the answer - we didn't obey, we sacrificed!

My husband would tell me to “take it easy,” “rest,” or “leave it until tomorrow,” but I wouldn't do it! That's rebellion! I would justify it by saying: “He doesn't know how much work I have to do,” or “He doesn't realize what it takes to run this house, or take care of all these children,” or “How can I take a nap? Who will watch the children when I am asleep?”

I *was* right: he didn't know - but God knew! And He is my protection and my children's protection. And God in His sovereignty has placed *your* husband over *you* for *your* protection. God has placed our husbands over us for our physical protection, our emotional protection and our spiritual protection, “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. For rulers are not a cause of fear... it is a minister of God to you for good.” Rom. 13:1-4. (See lesson 8, “Wives, Be Subject,” for “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge...” Hosea 4:6. And for more information on your husband as your spiritual protector, see lesson 9, “Helper Suitable” under the section “Who Should Be the Spiritual Leader?” and don't miss the testimony!) Sacrifice, instead of obedience, made me a martyr!

**Your outward appearance.** Many women wear a head covering, skirts only, or other modest clothing, but they are rebellious in their hearts. Even if your outward appearance deceives others into thinking you're submissive, the Lord knows your heart! “Do not look at his appearance...because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the **outward appearance**, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1Sam. 16:7. *Our ministry just received a phone call from a woman who was dogmatic about women wearing modest clothing (she even home schooled her children). However, she was committing adultery with a married man. “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” Jer. 17:9.*

There is a story of a little boy whose father continued to ask him to “sit down.” Finally the little boy did sit down and the father smiled. But the boy quickly exclaimed, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but on the inside – I'm standing up!” Many times we are standing up on the inside. Many times after we do the right thing and go along with our husband's plan we exclaim, “but I don't agree!” Sometimes it's our attitude that tells him that we don't agree. This, ladies, is rebellion.

**We will reap what we have sown.** If you were a rebel with your parents before you were married, you probably married a rebel. (Rebels, as Bill Gothard says, “seek out their own kind.” I guess it is God's way of making sure you are equally yoked!) And maybe your husband has become worse since you married him. Maybe he rebels against all sound wisdom. Maybe he has taken the rebellion as far as to rebel

against his commitment to be faithful to you, as is the case with those who are standing in faith for their marriages to be restored.

**Nothing is impossible.** If your husband is rebelling against the Lord, what do you do then? If you are a believer, then **you** begin to obey. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife.” 1Cor. 7:14. Yes, it is true. Obey now and watch as the Lord sanctifies your husband. Does this seem strange? Does it seem impossible, because “he is so bad”? It's possible, because you are one flesh. “Consequently they are no longer two but one flesh.” Matt. 19:6. “Neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.” 1Cor. 11:11. Can only half a body go one way and the other half go the other? Therefore, dear sister, have faith because “...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Hebr. 11:6.

**He who walks blameless.** Once you obey, God will turn your husband's heart. “He turns it (the heart) wherever He wishes.” Prov. 21:1. Remember, only “**he who walks blameless** will be delivered.” Prov. 28:18. Many women say that they don't want to obey their husbands; well then, don't be surprised that he won't obey the One who is over him either! “Christ is the head of **every** man, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.” 1Cor. 11:3. Don't give the excuse that your husband is not a Christian so, therefore, you don't have to obey him. Search the Scriptures for that exception; it's not there.

**Suffering unjustly.** But what if my husband is mean? “Be submissive with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when **suffering unjustly**. For what credit is there if, when you sin (disobey) and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right, and suffer for it you **patiently** endure it, this finds favor with God.” 1Pet. 2:18-20. The Word goes on to say that we have an example in the Lord and in His life. He asks us to follow in His footsteps as we'll see below. (If you are in an abusive situation you will find help in lesson 4, “Kindness Is on Her Tongue.”)

## If You Love Me

**Under the Law.** After you put God first in your life and begin to obey those in authority over you, you must then cast down the false doctrine that says, “I am saved by grace, so it's really OKAY to sin, because I am no longer **under the Law**.” Let's search the Scriptures for the Truth:

**Do your deeds deny Him?** “They profess to know God, but their **deeds deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.” Titus 1:16.

**Do you do what His Word says?** “Why do you call Me, Lord, and do not do what I say?” Luke 6:46.

**Are we to continue in sin?** “What shall we say then? **Are we to continue in sin** that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” Rom. 6:1-2, 15.

**Faith without works is dead.** “What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ...For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also **faith without**

**works is dead.**” James 2:14-26. Good works are the “fruits” of our conversion. Now, ask yourself these questions:

Do my deeds deny that I am a follower of the Lord?

Does grace give me a license to sin?

Since I am a believer, am I to have no good works?

**Confess your sins.** If you found these questions convicting, do as Scripture says: “Therefore, **confess your sins** one to another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.” James 5:16.

**I never knew you.** Many believe that you can live any way you wish and then enter into heaven once you die; is this true? “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you**; depart from me you who practice lawlessness.’” Matt. 7:22-23.

## Obedience to His Word

“**Wisdom** shouts in the street, she lifts her voice in the square. At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance to the gate in the city, she utters her sayings, how long, O naive ones, will you love simplicity. And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge. **Turn to my reproof**, behold, **I will pour out my spirit on you**; I will make my words known to you. Because I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention; and you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof; **I will even laugh at your calamity**; **I will mock when your dread comes**, when your dread comes on like a storm, and your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come on you.”

“Then they will call on me but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me, **because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord**. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them, and the complacency of fools shall destroy them. **But he who listens to me shall live securely, and shall be at ease from the dread of evil.**” Prov. 1:20-33.

**Obedience comes from the heart.** “...you became obedient from the *heart* to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” Rom. 6:17. And again, “...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but *the Lord looks at the heart.*” 1Sam 16:7.

**Obedience needs testing.** “Do not be surprised at the fiery trial which comes upon you for your **testing.**” 1Pet. 4:12.

**Obedience purifies your soul.** “Since you have in obedience to the Truth, **purified your souls.**” 1Pet. 1:22.

**Obedience gives testimony of Who your Father is.** “Obey My voice and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way in which I command you, that it may be well with

you. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.” Jer. 7:23-24.

**Your disobedience actually praises the wicked.** “Those who forsake the law *praise the wicked*, but those who keep the law strive with them.” Prov. 28:4.

**The prayers of the disobedient go unheard.** “He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” Prov. 28:9.

## Our Example Is Christ

**He was obedient *even unto death*.** “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Phil. 2:5-11.

**Learned obedience.** “Although He was a Son, He *learned obedience* from the things which He suffered.” Heb. 5:7-10.

**He was obedient and submissive to His authority.** “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but Thou wilt...My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done.” Matt. 26:39, 42.

**We must be submissive to authority.** “Wives, be submissive to your own husbands, as unto the Lord...but as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their own husbands in everything.” Eph. 5:22. “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” Rom. 13:1.

**The secret to success.** “All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those *who keep His covenant and His testimonies*. For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. The *secret of the Lord* is for **those who fear Him**.” Ps. 25:10-15.

**Self-condemned.** Unfortunately, most dispute or argue the true meaning of the Lord's teachings - which God says is to their *own* destruction. “But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being **self-condemned**.” Titus 3:9-11.

**Turn aside to myths.** Instead of searching for the Truth, they want others to agree with their wrong ideas or decisions. “But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will **turn aside to myths**.” 2Tim. 4:3-4.

**Foolishness to him.** You may be having trouble understanding all that the Scriptures say, but I guarantee that you will never understand them until you **first** obey them. “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are **foolishness to him**, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things...” 1Cor. 2:14-15.

**Walk by the Spirit.** “And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.” Ezek. 36:27. “But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Gal. 5:16. “If we live by the Spirit, let us also **walk by the Spirit**.” Gal. 5:25.

**Be self-disciplined in your obedience to His Word.** “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.” Ps. 32:9.

## **Obedience to Be Delivered from Our Trials**

**Remember that only the *blameless* will be delivered.** “He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, but he who is crooked will fall all at once.” Prov. 28:18.

**God watches and blesses what you do.** “Thou dost recompense a *man according to his work*.” Ps. 62:12.

**Watch your folly.** “But let them not turn back to **folly**. Surely His *salvation is near* to those who fear Him.” Ps. 85:8-9.

**Wisdom is needed.** “He who walks **wisely** will be delivered.” Prov. 28:26.

**Hear and fear.** “The one who despises the Word will be in debt to it, but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded.” Prov. 13:13.

**Seek and follow wisdom.** “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered.” Prov. 28:26.

**If you don't obey, He will discipline you.** “The Lord has **disciplined me** severely, but He has not given me over to death. I shall not die but live, and tell of the works of the Lord.” Ps. 118:18, 17.

**God is faithful to His Word.** “If his sons forsake My law, and do not walk in My judgments, If they violate My statutes, and do not keep My commandments, then I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” Ps. 89:30-32.

**Let us all bow our heads and pray Psalm 51 aloud:** “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted to Thee. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou will not despise.”

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**May God be with you as you strive to be more like Christ!**

**Personal commitment to put the Lord first in my life:** “Based on what I have learned in Scripture, I commit to do everything as unto the Lord. I will show the Lord, and others, my commitment to Him by my obedience to His Word, and specifically, by my submission to my husband.”

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_