

Message To The Church At Ephesus:

There Is This One Problem,  
You Take For Granted Your Most Important  
Love,  
The Lord Jesus Christ

In the Bible, God tells us about seven churches which show seven different types of believers that live in every generation:

1. The Ephesus type believer who has some divine good production but has left his first love. Rev. 2:1-7
2. The Smyrna type believer who is willing to accept suffering for blessing. Rev. 2:8-11
3. The Pergamum type believer who is warned about compromising and becoming a stumbling block to others. Rev. 2:12-17
4. The Thyatira type believer who tolerates false doctrine and false teaching even though he has love, faith, service and perseverance. Rev. 2:18-29
5. The Sardis type believer who needs to "wake up, and strengthen the things that remain." Rev. 3:1-6
6. The Philadelphia type believer who has kept with doctrine and has not denied the Lord's name. Rev. 3:7-13
7. The Laodicea type believer who is lukewarm. Rev 3:14-22

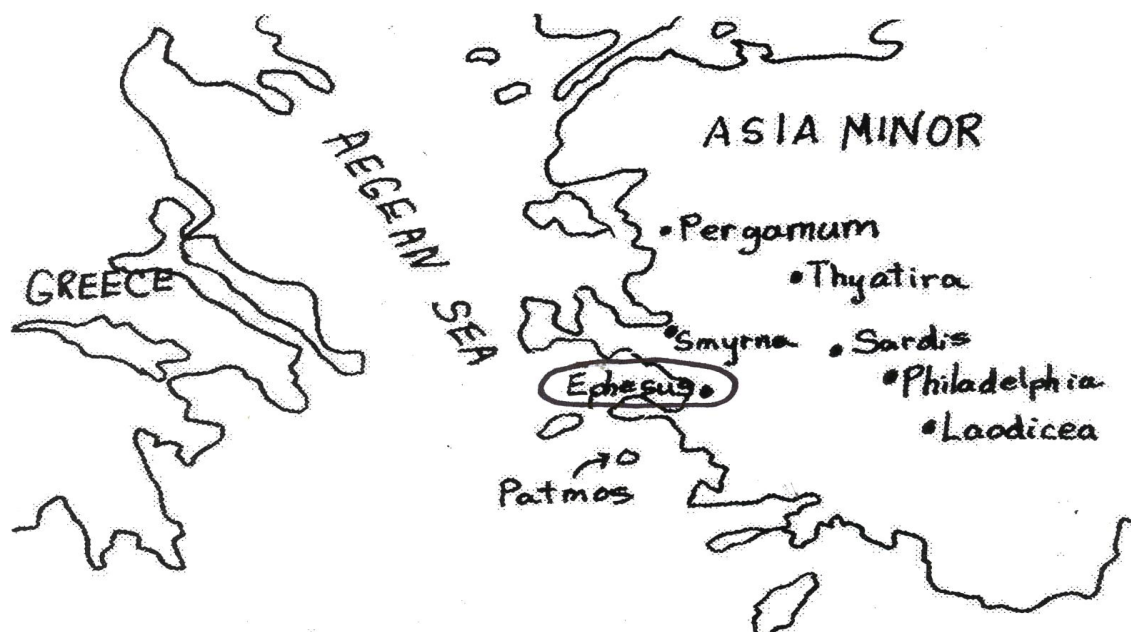


Revelation 2:4 But I have this against you [concerning you, Church at Ephesus], that you have left [taken lightly, taken for granted] your first Love.

First we'll talk about the believers in Ephesus. God was not against the believers at Ephesus, as God is never against us but always for us. But, He was thinking something that was concerning them, that they were taking lightly the correct reason and motivation for living. They were taking lightly their First Love which means their most important Love, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were still positive believers, but they were taking the Lord Jesus Christ for granted.



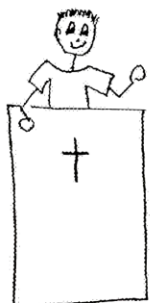
When we take someone for granted, we don't appreciate who they are and what they do. For instance, we can take our parents for granted. This means that we don't appreciate that they are our moms and dads, and that they do soooo much for us. However, they still remain our moms and dads and they still do soooo much for us. The Lord Jesus Christ was still faithful to the Ephesians, even though they took Him for granted. God could be saying the same thing to us, "Yet concerning you this is true; you have forsaken [taken for granted] your first Love." What is our reason or motivation for the way we live?



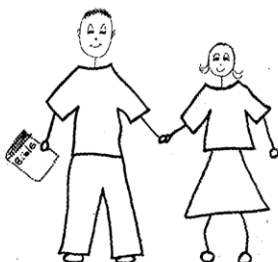
Our motivation for studying the Word of God is to be love for the Lord Jesus Christ. When this is our motivation, we are giving back or reciprocating the love God gave to us on the cross. Our pastor-teacher pours out light when he is teaching Bible doctrine, the Word of God. We believers receive the light, God's Word, and apply doctrine. When we do this, we reflect the light of Jesus Christ in our lives. Learning more and more about Jesus Christ will increase our love for Him. It keeps us moving in God's plan. We need to have Jesus Christ as our most important Love! He is our Light!



Pastor-Teacher



Dad and Mom



John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."



Listen to teaching on tape or CD.



Read lessons.



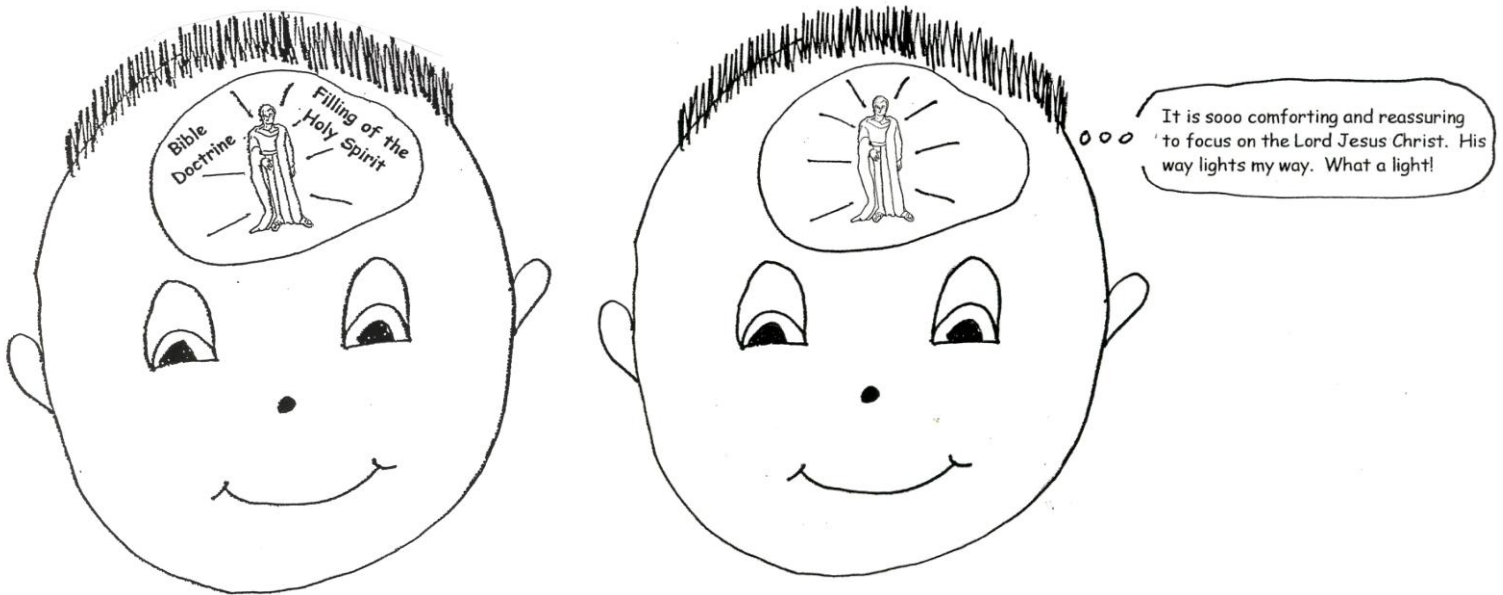
Listen to teacher at Bible study.



Psalm 18:28 You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

With Your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.

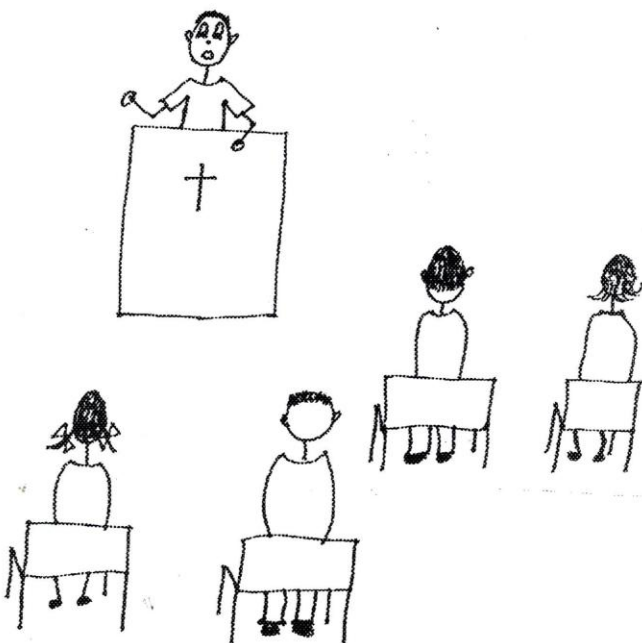
When we have the light, Bible doctrine, in our souls, we can have functional virtue. This means that we can function or act with God's thinking. This is because we have proper motivation, love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We can let our light shine. The world is filled with darkness and we can bring light, Bible doctrine, to the world. The more we grow in the grace and wisdom of God, the more we can show love, mercy, and the fruit of the Spirit.



Matthew 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds [virtue, knowledge producing action] and praise [glorify] your Father in heaven.

Revelation 2:1 To the messenger [pastor-teacher] of the church in Ephesus write: The One [Jesus Christ] who keeps on empowering the seven stars [teaching pastors in the Church Age] in His right hand, the One Who walks among the seven golden lampstands [the Church-Age believers],

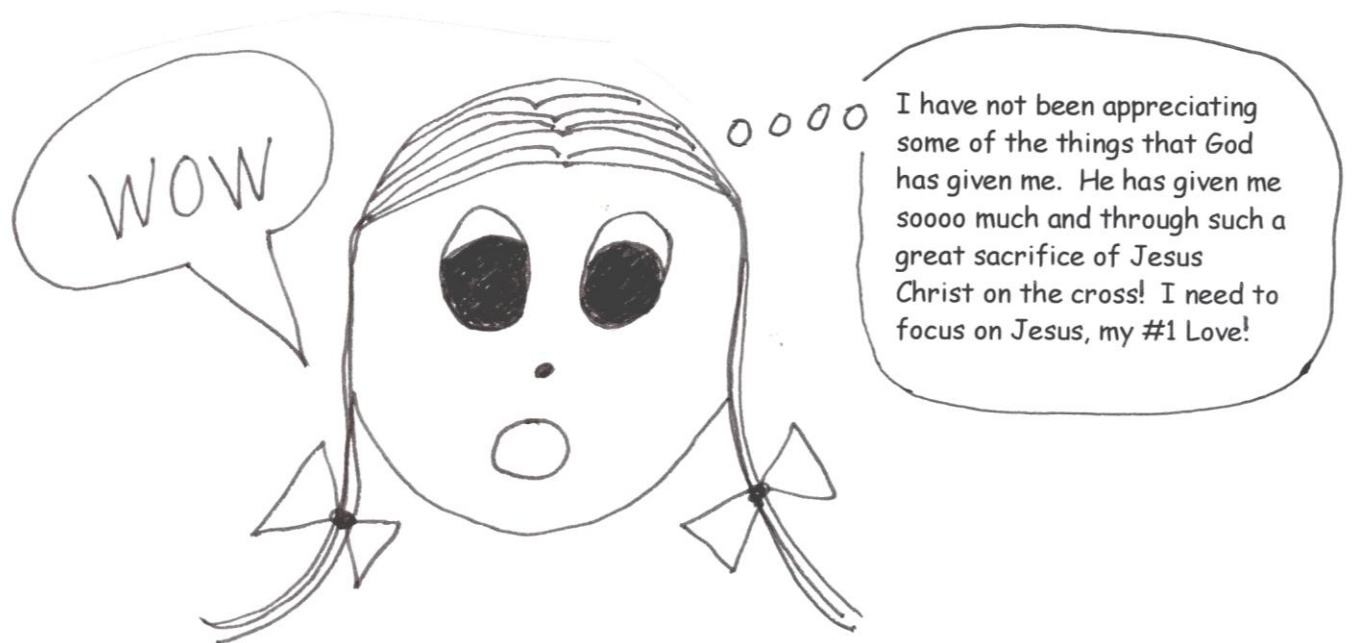
Stars, pastor-teachers, send out light from heaven, God's Word; lampstands, positive believers, learn the Word and shine that light. There will always be someone somewhere who can teach us Bible doctrine so that our lights can shine. God makes sure of that. There will always be stars, pastor-teachers. Our Lord has given everyone a correct pastor-teacher. He has given the pastor-teachers authority and power over their students. It is God's responsibility to bring the Word to those who have positive volition. We just need to be available for our pastor-teacher to teach us. Our I.Q. doesn't even matter. What matters is that we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and He will make the Bible doctrine clear to us! He gives us the light!



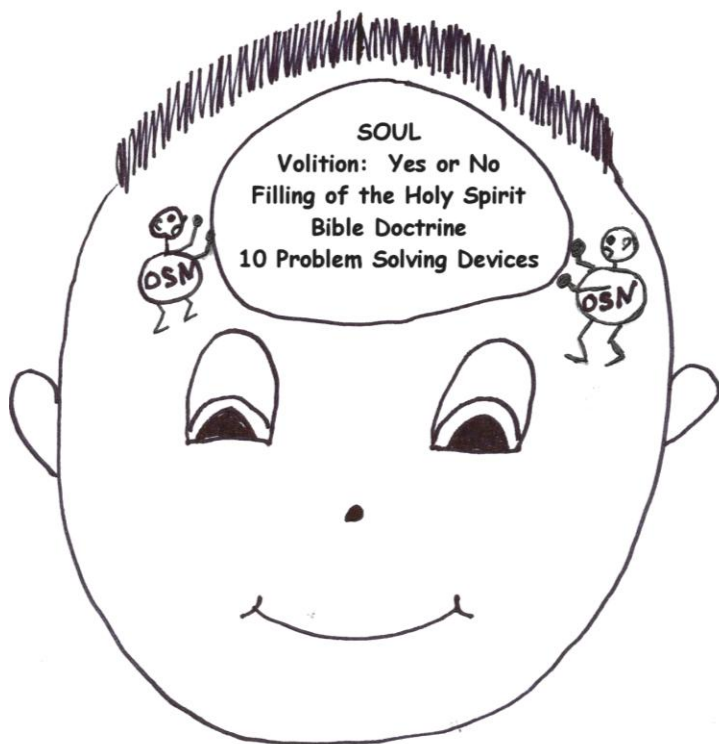
Bible study classes.

Revelation 2:4 But I have this against you [concerning you], that you have left your first love.

Let's say that things are going well in our lives. However, we lightly esteem God. It's not that we are against God, but we really don't appreciate that we are royal priests and that we have a responsibility to represent ourselves before God. We don't appreciate that we are royal ambassadors and that we are to represent God to mankind. We don't take into consideration that we have been given spiritual gifts and that we are to use our time, talents, and treasures to bring glory to God. We're not taking our calling seriously. We're not making Jesus Christ our #1 Love!

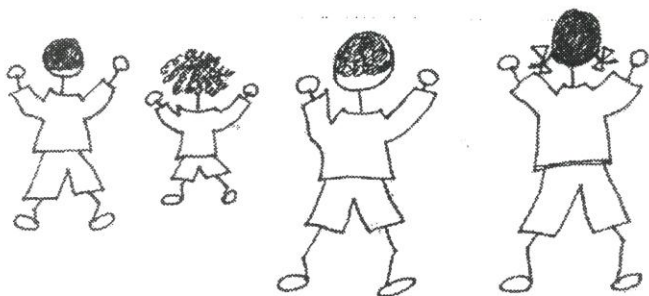
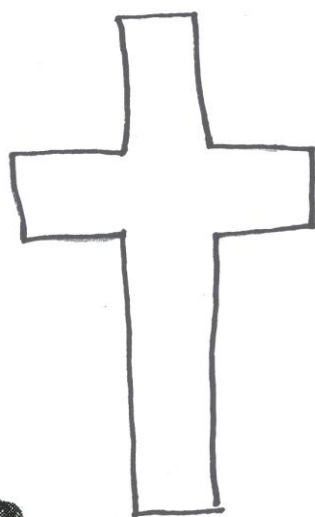
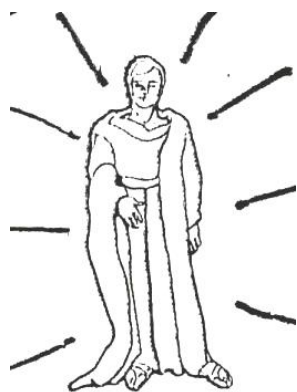


There is a secret agent of Satan in our body called the old sin nature. This secret agent wants to drag us away from the plan of God and from our #1 Love. YIKES! However, our volition is the captain of our soul, and the captain can say "NO" to the temptations of the secret agent, the old sin nature. Our volition can say "NO" to tests the old sin nature puts in our thinking. God gives us all of the tools that we need: filling of the Holy Spirit, Bible doctrine, and the ten problem solving devices. If we really have love for the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be willing to pass the old sin nature tests. Daily we face the tests. The battle will be going on in our souls until the day we die! Sometimes we will win, and sometimes we will lose. But what if we don't resist the temptation? Then we commit a sin. However, there is a solution. We can REBOUND!



Galatians 5:16-18 So I say, live [walk] by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The secret agent will also bring in people testing and thought testing. Satan wants us to become distracted by people and our thoughts. People can disappoint us and then our thoughts can be very negative towards them and towards ourselves. NOT A GOOD TRAIN OF THOUGHT! This will only drag us down. God wants to pull us up to see His Person and thoughts! If we keep Jesus Christ as our #1 Love, we can pass the people and thought tests.

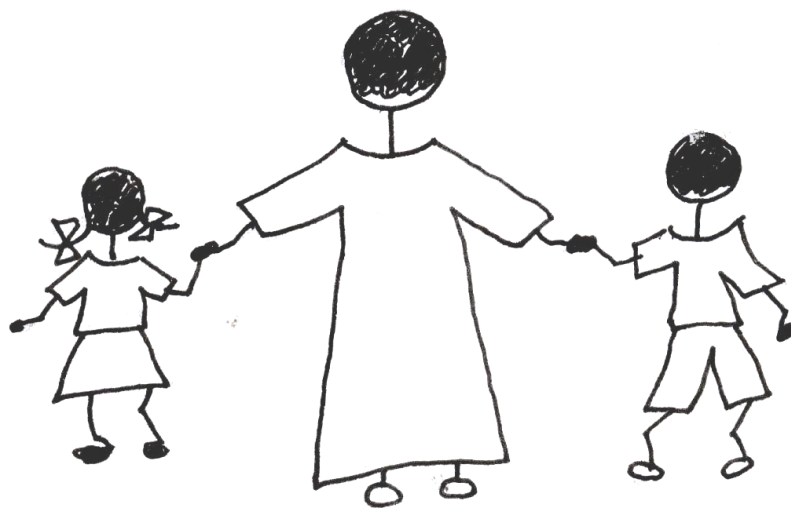
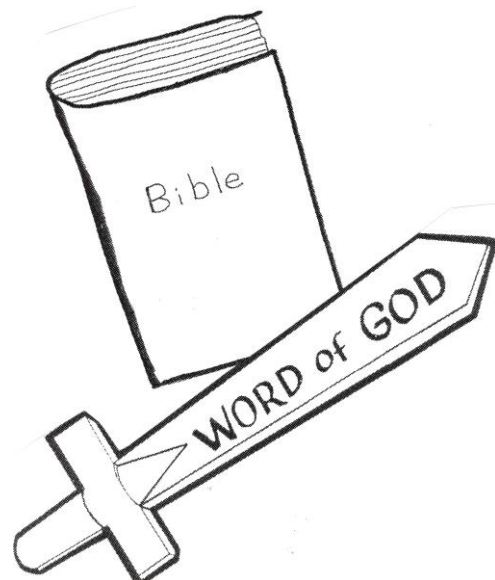


2 Corinthians 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh [in a body] we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [conflict] are not of the flesh [human attributes] but divinely powerful for the destruction of

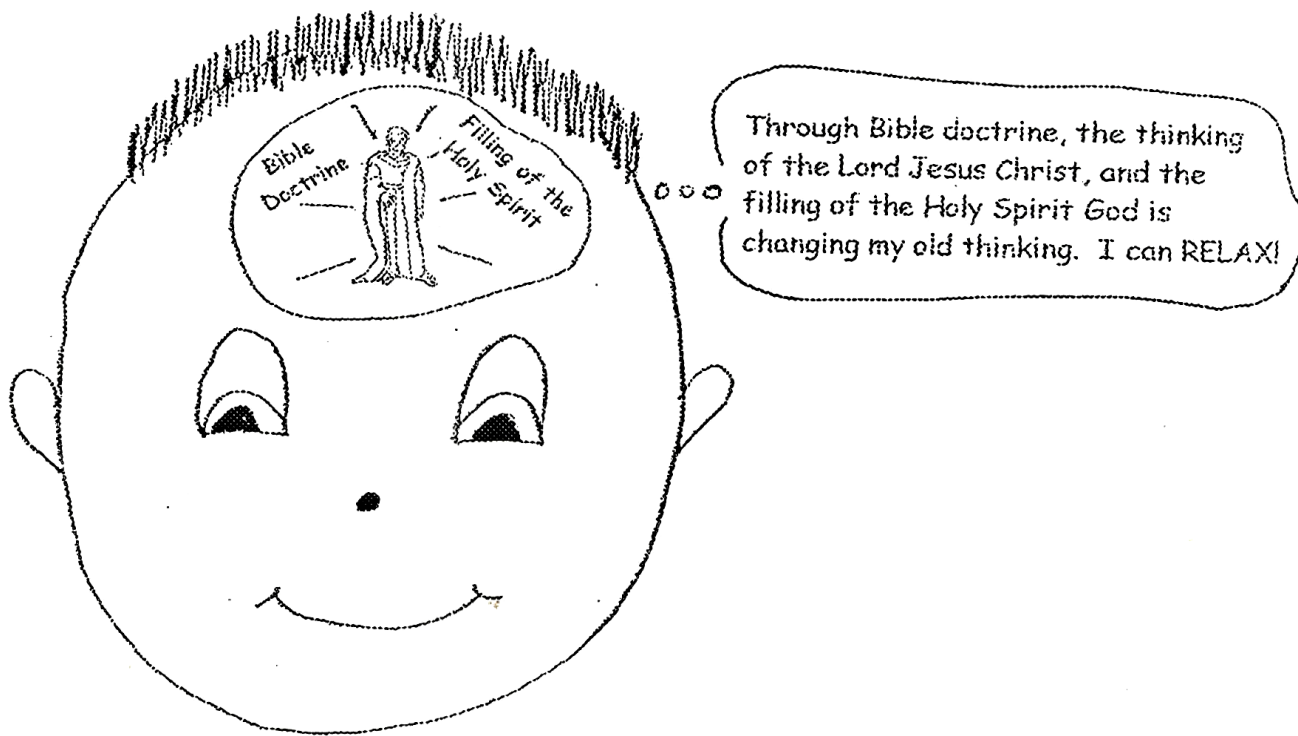
fortresses. We are destroying speculation [cosmic thoughts] and every lofty thing [arrogance] raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready [doctrine in the mind] to punish all disobedience [human viewpoint], whenever your obedience is complete [when we continue using Bible doctrine].

1Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of you faith, the salvation of your souls.

The way we come to love Jesus Christ is to come to know Him. In knowing Him, we come to know ourselves better. We do this through learning, believing, and applying doctrine. This gives us a good mental attitude in our souls. Then we are motivated by our love for Jesus Christ. We are never to forget the humility we are to have toward God and His Word. We can fall into the cosmic system even after we reach maturity. Anytime we fall, all we have to do is repent, change our mind. We rebound and keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ, our most important Love!



**God** will change and control the pace of our spiritual lives. **He** will make us what He wants us to be. **He** will give us what we need to do His will. Are we willing to let God strip us of our human viewpoint? Do we really want to know Him? Do we want to lose our life and have the life of Jesus? When the pressure is on, will we leave our #1 Love, or will we take the challenge from God? **God** will challenge us not to lose our #1 Love and He will give us support to carry out His plan. Let's make Jesus Christ our most important Love and accept God's challenge!!! Let's remember the lesson from the Church at Ephesus.



2Tim 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith [Bible doctrine]; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To Him who overcomes [the winner, and you can be one], I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

So, if we accept God's challenge and put Jesus Christ as our #1 Love, with God's power we can overcome our obstacles. If we eat big time from His tree of life on earth, metabolize God's Word, we can be winners in the angelic conflict! Then God will grant us the special privilege of eating of the tree of life in His special garden, the Paradise of God. The believer who goes forward in God's plan despite the distractions of the cosmic system, will feast on the very best in eternity.

Let's grow in God's grace and knowledge so that we can enjoy His garden to the fullest! Let's choose to eat from the tree of life and party with Jesus and winner believers in the Paradise of God!!!



Learn about God...

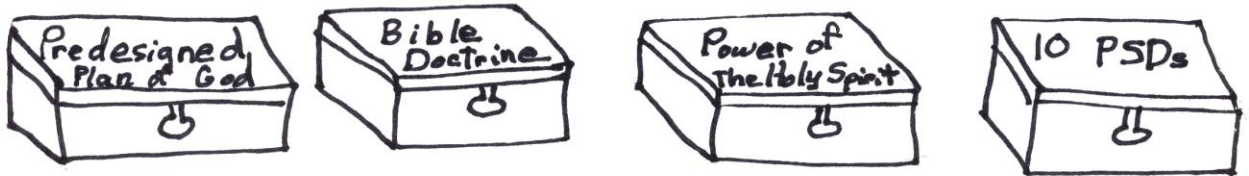


through Bible study classes...

Connect the dots.



Remember to use the assets or gifts God has given us so that we can keep Jesus Christ as our #1 Love. Add some color to the picture! Maybe you'd like to put more in the picture.



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References: Robert McLaughlin Bible Ministries

[www.gbible.org](http://www.gbible.org)

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A warning about losing your first love, parts 1-3.

Tree of Life, 1-10-1999