

HOW TO FALL DEEPER IN LOVE WITH JESUS

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation, Jesus says this to the church:

Revelation 3:20 (NLT) "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

Revelation 2:2-4 (NKJV) "I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Why should Jesus be knocking if we have already let Him in and why should He need to say, "you have lost your first love" if all is well?

I'm quite sure that no one listening to this message today will say, "I don't want to be in love with Jesus and I've closed the door to my heart." On the contrary, I believe we would say, "I want to grow deeper in love with Jesus day to day." But it does happen and we need to learn to avoid this problem.

This morning's message will help us identify ways in which we can ensure that our love relationship with Jesus gets better and better every day.

MESSAGE

WHAT DOES FIRST LOVE LOOK LIKE AND HOW DOES A LOVE RELATIONSHIP PROGRESS?

- When you look at each other and feel butterflies in your tummy.
- When the world can be exploding all around you but all you see is the one you are in love with.
- When their touch sends tingles all over you.
- When you can't think straight (muis neste)!
- When you don't know how to say goodbye on the phone, "you put down first", "no, you put down first".
- When every moment apart seems like a lifetime.
- When the one you love is all you can speak about.

How does one fall in love?

- We are often initially attracted to another person physically.
- Then the more we find out about them and get to know them, the more we like them.
- As we share things back and forth we begin to see their hearts, their motives, their desires.

- We begin to be more comfortable and trusting with them.
- Soon, the more we are with them, the more we want to be with them.
- The relationship begins to grow stronger.
 - Sexual intimacy becomes part of it (after marriage of course).
 - We learn how to please the one we love.
 - We also learn what hurts them, what they like and don't like.
- We truly become one.

The risk is that we allow other things, work, family, sport, hobbies and sometimes even church commitments to get in the way. If we are not careful, instead of growing together we could grow apart and fall out of love, losing the attraction, excitement and fulfillment that comes from our relationship with our spouse.

In reality, a successful relationship will take work.

- We need to be aware of where we are at in our relationship.
- We need to deal with problems.
- We need to take steps to make sure that the sizzle doesn't become fizzle.

Although our relationship with Jesus is a spiritual relationship, it is no less real, it is no less intimate and we should feel many of the same emotions and have many of the same experiences. It even faces many of the same risks.

GROWING DEEPER IN LOVE WITH JESUS

There's a song with these words: "Every day with You Lord, is sweeter than the day before". An old chorus goes "sweeter as the days go by" (sing it).

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This is the way it's meant to be. God wants us to grow in Him daily from glory to glory.

The beautiful love book, Song of Songs contains some keys to growing in love and we know it's not only a picture of a marital love relationship but it's also about Christ and His bride.

1. ONLY HAVE EYES FOR JESUS

As His bride, Jesus only has eyes for us, and we need to make sure we only have eyes for Him.

Song of Solomon 2:2-3 (NLT) (Him) Like a lily among thistles is my darling among young women. (Her) Like the finest apple tree in the orchard is my lover among other young men.

- Both of them see the other as standing out among others, the best, the most precious, their choice above all others.
- If our eyes start roving, we can easily be distracted.
- Think about the Israelites despising the manna from God and longing back to the pots of Egypt.

Are we straining our necks and looking around at all the distractions the enemy has laid on our path, or have we only got eyes for Jesus. If we keep our eyes upon Him, we will gaze upon His beauty and be enthralled.

Psalm 16:8 (NIV) I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With Him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

As we keep our eyes on Jesus, our love for Him cannot be shaken, it can't decrease, it can only increase.

2. BE CAPTIVATED BY HIS LOVE

Song of Solomon 2:4-5 (NLT) He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me. Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, For I am weak with love.

- Christ's love for us is obvious, it could not have been shown in a greater way than the Cross.
- But there is more, He fellowships with us, He gave us His Holy Spirit, He heals us, He comforts us, He spoils us.

To fall deeper in love with Jesus, we should meditate on who Jesus is, what He has done in our lives, the blessings we have from Him and the joy we get from being in His presence.

David was great at this – look at what he wrote:

Psalm 139:1-6 (NKJV) O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ² You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ³ You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. ⁵ You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

David writes this and as he ponders on the vastness of the LORD's love for us, he can almost not comprehend it!

How else can we respond to this love except by loving Jesus back. Let our prayer today be this: "Jesus I love you more and more each day".

Is this something we practice. Do we spend time pondering, praising and thanking Jesus for what He means to us and for how precious He is to us, it will surely help us grow deeper in love with Him.

3. REALISE THAT JESUS WANTS US WITH HIM

One of the best experiences in a relationship is knowing that the other person wants to be with you.

- When Cheryl (my wife) calls me in the afternoon to say “where are you, what are you up to”, I know what she’s really saying – she’s saying, “I’m missing you, I want to be with you, come home already”. And that makes me feel loved.
- The natural reaction to that is to want to go home and be with her too.

It’s the same with Jesus: **Song of Solomon 2:8-10** (NLT) Ah, I hear my lover coming! He is leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. 9 My lover is like a swift gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he is behind the wall, looking through the window, peering into the room. 10 My lover said to me, “Rise up, my darling! Come away with me, my fair one!

- She was anticipating his visit!
- Jesus is there, looking at us, looking at our hearts, calling us, saying, “come walk with Me, I want to be with you”.
- This is just like Revelation 3:20 “See, I stand at the door and knock.”

Jesus never gets tired of being with us. He wants us to come away with Him. One day, He’s going to come and fetch us to live with Him all the time.

Jesus wants to whisper in our ear, He wants to hold us in His arms – As we start to realise how much our Lord wants to be with us, it will make us want to be with Him too.

4. REALISE THAT JESUS SEES US AS BEAUTIFUL BEYOND WORDS

Think about how you feel when the one you love tells you that they think you are beautiful or handsome. It just brings that butterfly right back to your tummy!

Do we realise that **Jesus sees us as beautiful**?

Song of Solomon 4:1a (NLT) Young Man....4 You are beautiful, my darling, beautiful beyond words.

Could Jesus really say that? Of course He can – It’s Him who made us beautiful. We are His bride. He is making sure that in every aspect of our lives we are being perfected – He perfects all things concerning me!

We fall more in love with Jesus every day because we know that He takes the ugliness of sin from our lives and covers it with the precious robe of righteousness that He gives to us.

How can we not love the One who sees us as beautiful beyond words!

5. WE DO WHAT IT TAKES TO KEEP THAT LOVE ALIVE

Song of Solomon 7:10-12(NLT) Young Woman

I am my lover's, and he claims me as his own. 11 Come, my love, let us go out to the fields and spend the night among the wildflowers. 12 Let us get up early and go to the vineyards to see if the grapevines have budded, if the blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love.

- We declare that we belong to Jesus, just as He is ours.
- We look for excuses to spend time with Jesus – we find reasons to spend time with Him.
- We get up early
- We give Him our love.

Song of Solomon 7:13(NLT) There the mandrakes give off their fragrance, and the finest fruits are at our door, new delights as well as old, which I have saved for you, my lover.

- A mandrake has fertility and aphrodisiac properties – this speaks of finding ways to be incredibly intimate with Jesus.
- We present the finest fruits to Him – allow the fruit of the Spirit to be present in our life.
- We present new delights as well as old to Him.
 - We don't only present ourselves to Jesus in the way we always have, but rather, we are always on the lookout to find new ways to love Him. This will help us keep focused on not letting that first love die.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is calling us to fall deeper in love with Him today.

Our Saviour loves us beyond measure. In Romans 8, we read that nothing can separate us from His love. Our natural desire is, and must be, to allow our love for Him to blossom and flourish. To ensure that the sizzle doesn't become fizzle in our relationship with the Lord here are some steps we can take:

1. We only have eyes for Jesus.
2. We become captivated by His love.
3. We realise that He wants to be with us and we respond by wanting to be with Him.
4. We realise that Jesus sees us as beautiful beyond words.
5. We do our part to keep that love alive.

So today the challenge is, not to renew our first love, not even to open the door and let Jesus in, but rather to desire to have a growing love relationship with Jesus that gets sweeter every day!