Life Group Discussion Guide

Returning to Your First Love

Icebreaker

Share about a time when you became so busy with responsibilities, work, ministry, or family commitments that you unintentionally neglected an important relationship. What helped restore that relationship?

Opening Scripture

Revelation 2:4 (AMP)

> "But I have this [charge] against you, that you have left your first love [you have lost the depth of love that you first had for Me]."

Central Message

When Christ is our first love and our hearts are filled with awe for Him, the enemy's deceptions, distractions, manipulation, and counterfeits lose their power.

Discussion Point 1: Busy for Jesus but Drifting from Jesus

Jesus commended the church in Ephesus for their hard work, perseverance, discernment, and faithfulness, yet He challenged them for leaving their first love.

Read

Revelation 2:1-5

> 1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Discuss

1. Why do you think it is possible to be active in ministry and still drift from intimacy with Jesus?
2. Which of the following examples stands out most to you?
    - Serving without intimacy
    - Worshipping without true worship
    - Reading the Bible only for information
    - Public prayer without private fellowship
3. Have you experienced a season where your relationship with Jesus felt more like duty than delight?
4. What practical habits helped you grow closer to Jesus in the past?

Application

Jesus gives three steps:

- Remember
- Repent
- Return

Take a few moments to discuss:

- What do you need to remember?
- Is there anything you need to repent of?
- What is one practical way you can return to simple devotion this week?

Discussion Point 2: Jesus Still Pursues Us

Jesus addressed the church in Laodicea, a church that appeared successful but had become lukewarm. Yet Jesus was still knocking at the door.

Read

Revelation 3:14-20

> 14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
>
> 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
>
> 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
>
> 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
>
> 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.
>
> 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
>
> 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Discuss

1. What stands out to you about Jesus standing outside and knocking?
2. What does this passage teach us about the heart of Jesus toward believers who have drifted?
3. Why is it important to remember that His correction comes from love rather than rejection?
4. What does it practically mean to "open the door" to Jesus today?

Application

Read Revelation 3:20 together. What invitation is Jesus extending to you personally right now?

Discussion Point 3: What Have We Tolerated?

The church in Thyatira had many strengths, but Jesus confronted what they were tolerating.

Read

Revelation 2:18-23

> 18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;
>
> 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.
>
> 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
>
> 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
>
> 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.
>
> 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Discuss

1. Why is tolerance of spiritual compromise so dangerous?
2. The sermon describes the "Jezebel pattern" as:
    - Control instead of trust
    - Manipulation instead of honesty
    - Deception instead of truth
    - Compromise instead of obedience
    - Self-promotion instead of worship

    Where do you see these pressures in today's culture?

3. Why is it easier to identify problems in others than in ourselves?
4. Which question from the sermon speaks most deeply to you?

> "Lord, what have I tolerated in my own heart that is competing with my love for You?"

Personal Reflection

Which of these might be competing with your devotion to Christ?

- Bitterness
- Unforgiveness
- Pride
- A need for control
- Approval of people
- Constant distraction
- Spiritual passivity

Discussion Point 4: First Love Is the Antidote

The answer to deception, distraction, compromise, and spiritual drift is not trying harder but returning to Jesus.

Read

Revelation 2:24-29

> 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.
>
> 25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.
>
> 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
>
> 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
>
> 28 And I will give him the morning star.
>
> 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

John 8:31-32

> 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
>
> 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

James 4:7-8

> 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
>
> 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Discuss

1. What does "hold fast" look like practically in your life right now?
2. How does abiding in God's Word strengthen your love for Jesus?
3. James teaches us to submit to God, resist the devil, and draw near to Him. Why is this order important?
4. How does a growing love for Jesus help us overcome temptation and distraction?

Application Challenge

Each person identify one way they will intentionally prioritize Jesus this week:

- Daily worship time
- Reading Scripture
- Prayer and listening
- Journaling
- Fasting from distractions
- Acts of obedience

Share your commitment with the group and ask someone to check in with you during the week.

Going Deeper

Read James 4:7-8 Together

> "So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Discuss

1. Why do many Christians focus more on resisting the devil than drawing near to God?
2. How does intimacy with Jesus become our greatest protection against deception?
3. What practical distractions compete for first place in our lives today?
4. What would it look like for Jesus to truly be first in every area of your life?

Prayer Ministry Time

Personal Reflection

Ask the Holy Spirit:

1. Have I lost the depth of love I once had for Jesus?
2. What distractions or competing affections have taken first place in my life?
3. What do I need to remember, repent of, and return to?

Allow a few moments of silence for personal reflection.

Group Prayer

Pray for:

- Renewed passion for Jesus
- Fresh intimacy with Christ
- Discernment against deception and distraction
- Courage to repent where needed
- A heart that continually puts Jesus first
- A lifestyle of abiding in Christ

Memory Verse

> "But I have this [charge] against you, that you have left your first love [you have lost the depth of love that you first had for Me]."
>
> **Revelation 2:4 (AMP)**

Take-Home Thought

You do not overcome deception, compromise, and distraction simply by trying harder. You overcome them by returning to Jesus and keeping Him as your first love.