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A Lost Love

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SEVEN is a Biblical sign of perfection, completeness.
7-Stars were seven churches. In Christ's hand!
7-Candlesticks were seven churches of light!!
CHURCH OF CHRIST at Ephesus, a typical church of humans: doing some good; doing some bad.
Enough good to hope for correction of bad.
Enough bad to invalidate all the good if not corrected soon.
HUMAN NATURE tends to run in cycles. Repeat itself.
LESSON: A search of Soul and Self to be sure I am as healthy Spiritually as I should be.

I. FOUR COMPLIMENTS PAID THE Ephesian Church.

v.2 A. Credit due: For Works and Labor. (Toil) to the point of sweat and near exhaustion.

v.2 B. Credit due: For testing and trying all men and marking those who were false. II John 8-11.*
1. I John 4:1-3. Don't be too timid & courteous Mark those who turn liberty to license.
2. Prey on church charity. Prof. beggars.
Not destroying church; just improving on it, modernizing and streamlining it.

v.3 C. Credit due: Had stedfast endurance (patience). Courageous gallantry which accepts hardship and suffering, turning them to glory in Christ.

v.6 D. Credit due: Hated the DEEDS of Nicolaitanes.
Hate: defined "a right aversion to evil."
1. Nicolaitan doctrine of eating meats offered to idols and fornication also at Pergamum, vs. 15 and Thyatira, vs. 20 (Jezebel.)
2. Nicolaitanes and Balaamites one and same.
Greeks & Hebrew forms of: "Conquer the people."
3. TODAY: Same unrestrained indulgences, shamelessness in uncleanness.

II. TWO CHARGES AGAINST THEM.
A. Lost your First-Love!
1. Poor pacing: Original fire, zeal and enthusiasm; only smouldering coals left.
2. Poor evaluation: Love and trust of brotherhood very low. Skeptical and sensitive.

ANATOMY of a church.
A lost love…continued

III.

3. Poor approach: Heresy-hunting went too far; became calloused, demanding, hard.
4. Poor result: Developed sour and bitter orthodoxy at cost of ABILITY to forgive, forget, unite, love, fellowship & grow.

B. Lost your first-Works! Spirit, parent of works!
1. Lost the heart to work, cooperate, care and rise above problems & obstacles.

FOUR PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS EVIDENT.
1. Organizational accuracy and doctrinal inerrancy does not insure a powerful and productive Body of Christ!
2. Soundness in the Faith cannot take the place of loving-benevolence and zealous-evangelism.
3. The Price of this Ephesian-orthodoxy was too high in LOSS of first, pure, on-fire love.

IV.

GOD’S REMEDY. Three-fold program mandatory.
1. REMEMBER: Think back to days after conversion. Thrills, joys, excitement, etc.
   Ill. I remember: 3 boys baptized shortly after I was. Told them all about it! Relief. Joy. Peace of mind. Hope.
2. REPENT: Requires admission first that I was wrong, out of balance, meant well!!!
   a. Change MIND, change ATTITUDE, change work-pattern. "Glad to TEACH, ASST., ETC.
3. RETURN: to the STARTING PLACE! Innocent—1 to fruit-bearing again: one call a week, then 2 then 3.
   QUOTE: Harry Emerson Fosdick: "In Christian no man need stay where he is!"

V.

TWO REWARDS OFFERED. One good. One bad.
1. For disobedience: Remove candlestick—take life away here and hereafter. Phy. & Spr.
2. For obedience: Grant admission to the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God.
2. Fairest Garden of them all; full of pleasant parks and meadows; and every good and beautiful thing! HEAVEN!

EACH OF US destined somewhere? Where?

Heaven at the end of a life of sweet, Christian love and service to others. Acts 2:38, 42.

Other course is unthinkable!!!

I Thess. 1:7-9.