

# Nothing Without Love | Warning Signs #2

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We've probably all had a situation where we really thought we were moving in the right direction only to discover that we were actually way off. This is what happened to the Church at Ephesus. They felt confident in their spirituality because they were hard-working, persevering and doctrinally pure. However, because they had lost their genuine affection for God and other Christians, Jesus has some strong words for them.

## Jesus Is Pleased by Hard-Working, Patiently-Enduring, Doctrinally-Pure Christians

As with most of the letters of Revelation, Jesus begins his message with some words of genuine praise for the church.

***Revelation 2:3-4** I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.*

The Ephesian Christians were far from spiritual slackers or doctrinally weak – just the opposite! They were fully-engaged at their church, and didn't waver in their commitment to God. They withstood false teaching and dismissed those who contradicted the Bible in their teaching. These were all very admirable qualities, however, there was a glaring hole in their spiritual life.

*[Related: [Upside Down | Grid #2](#)]*

## Jesus Condemns Activity Without Affection

Despite all their faithful spiritual activity, they lacked the one thing that is supposed to drive it all – love.

***Revelation 2:5** But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!*

This lack of “love” isn't just talking about emotion, but more the idea of affection. Affection includes emotion, but also the idea of being attached to someone, caring for them, having genuine concern for them, and a desire to be with them. The Ephesians apparently once had this toward God and each other, but had somehow lost it along the way. Now, their once loving relationship with God had turned into a cold, heartless religious system. So Jesus gives them a strongly-worded challenge.

*[Related: [How Do I Love People I Don't Like](#)]*

*[Related: [Share Truth in Love](#)]*

## Jesus Calls Us Back to Genuine Love

Jesus give them some very specific instructions, and a threat of consequence if they ignore them.

**Revelation 2:5** *Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches.*

He first calls them to remember from where they have fallen – to look back and remember what it was like to have genuine affection for God and others. Then Jesus tells them to repent – to turn from their wrong path. Repentance is acknowledging that you're going in the wrong direction, and then reorienting your life so that you start moving in the right one. Finally, Jesus tells them to rekindle the love they once had. He wants them to engage in the sorts of practices that once filled their hearts and minds with love.

Jesus ends this with a serious threat that he will take away their blessing and light in the world if they don't change. This shows us that love is not some casual matter, but deadly serious. The Ephesians, and us, are reminded that if our connection to God simply revolves around religious activity, we're missing the point. A genuine relationship with God is always first rooted in love.

*[Related: RNC + Social Issues + Love + Matthew 22]*

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *Share an example when you really thought you were right, but turned out to be dead wrong*
3. *Read [Ephesians 2:2-3](#). Summarize the areas where the Ephesian Christians were doing really well. What do you think that looked like in their world? What would those same things look like in our world today?*
4. *How do we discern good vs. bad teaching today? How should we respond where we discover bad teaching?*
5. *Read [Ephesians 2:4](#). What do you think Jesus meant by "love?" How do you think their lack of love manifested in their relationship with God and others?*
6. *Where do you see a lack of love among Christians today? Is it more toward God or other people?*
7. *Read [Ephesians 2:5](#). Summarize Jesus' instructions for the Ephesians. What would each of these have looked like for them 2000 years ago, and what would they look like for us today?*
8. *What do you think Jesus meant with his threat to "remove their lampstand?"*
9. *Why do you think that Jesus takes their lack of love so seriously?*
10. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*