

## Implication Guide: Week 3

This paper is designed to be used in conjunction with Sunday's message. We long to be a church where we don't just hear a message on Sunday and then let it slip away until we come back next week to hear another one. The goal isn't hearing the Word alone. The goal is to be hearers who do the Word. Please set aside some time this week to work through this implication guide.

### Teaching Review

Paul came to Ephesus and brought the gospel of Jesus with him. As it does with any idol of every culture, the gospel came into conflict with Artemis of the Ephesians. In Acts 19, after Paul had spent nearly three years in Ephesus preaching Christ, we saw this great confrontation that ended with Paul leaving Ephesus.

Some years later Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians. In it, he gave them the blueprint for building a strong gospel-centered church in the city. Begin with a foundation of God's sovereignty. Build with the gospel of grace. And push into community with a mission.

Now, Paul is getting set to head to Jerusalem. He knows that his future is ominous and that he likely will never see the Ephesians again. So, he calls the elders of the church in Ephesus to a town called Miletus. There he gives a great speech to the elders recounting his model faithfulness to them and giving them a charge to shepherd the church well.

So, how did they do? How did the church fair? We actually have some clues. Some years later, the Apostle John was imprisoned on an island. He had a vision of Jesus, who had some things to say about the Church in Ephesus. They had kept doing good stuff, and had not turned away in heresy. However, they had lost their first love. This week we'd like to take some time working through the implications of losing your first love.

### Part 1: Evidences of Having Forgotten Your First Love

Begin by reading through the following list. Spend time journaling, praying, or discussing with others about if you see any of these in yourself. How do they come out? When?

1. "Jesus died on the cross for me" hits your affections as much as "We ate chicken for dinner."
2. Your soul no longer longs for every word from your bible like a sweet drip of honey after a 40-day fast.
3. You are doing the good things, not doing the bad things, but for no reason.
4. Over the last week, you have few examples of actively loving people, and you are actively loving less people.
5. You spend more time, energy, and words critiquing personal performances in the church than whole-heartedly worshipping the Living Creator God, encouraging the blood-bought body of Christ, and declaring and demonstrating the good news of Christ to those who are perishing in their worship of false god's who are or will crush them

## **Part 2: Extremely Practical Tips for Regaining Your First Love**

Wrestle through the following questions with at least one other person from your community.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of your first love.  
*Spend some time praying together for each other.*
  
2. Open Bible. Find Jesus.  
*Do you know how to read your Bible? Do you read it to learn about and worship Jesus? If not, what do you need to do to learn how?*
  
3. Confess to Jesus and to your community.  
*Are you willing to share your answers to Part 1? Answering that part truthfully to other people who love and care about you is confession.*
  
4. Ask your community to preach the gospel to you.  
Coach each other on how to do this?
  
5. Preach the Gospel to yourself.  
*Discuss what resources or passages of Scripture you have found to be most helpful for you to preach the gospel to yourself.*