

The Power of First-Love Praying (Part 1)

Scripture:

I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first...

Revelation 2:2-5 (NIV)

Going Back to Go Forward! Pioneers... Then and Now Every Generation Has Its Pioneers!

Scripture:

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way...

Hebrews 12:1-2 (MSG)

Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time.

Hebrews 12:15 (MSG)

The Esau Syndrome:

Watch out for the Esau syndrome: trading away God's lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite. You well know how Esau later regretted that impulsive act and wanted God's blessing—but by then it was too late, tears or no tears.

Hebrews 12:16-17 (MSG)

The Main Heading in The Message Bible Reads:

“An Unshakable Kingdom”

Unlike your ancestors, you didn't come to Mount Sinai—all that volcanic blaze and earthshaking rumble—to hear God speak. The earsplitting words and soul-searching message terrified them and they begged him to stop. When they heard the words—“If an animal touches the Mountain, it's as good as dead”—they were afraid to move. Even Moses was terrified.

Hebrews 12:18-21 (MSG)

The Text Continues:

No, that's not your experience at all. You've come to Mount Zion, the city where the living God resides... you've come to Jesus, who presents us with a new covenant, a fresh charter from God...

Hebrews 12:22, 24 (MSG)

So don't turn a deaf ear to these gracious words. If those who ignored earthly warnings didn't get away with it, what will happen to us if we turn our backs on heavenly

warnings? His voice that time shook the earth to its foundations; this time—he's told us this quite plainly—he'll also rock the heavens: "One last shaking, from top to bottom, stem to stern."

Hebrews 12:25-26 (MSG)

The phrase "one last shaking" means a thorough housecleaning, getting rid of all the historical and religious junk so that the unshakable essentials stand clear and uncluttered.

Hebrews 12:27 (MSG)

Do you see what we've got? An unshakable kingdom! And do you see how thankful we must be? Not only thankful, but brimming with worship, deeply reverent before God. For God is not an indifferent bystander. He's actively cleaning house, torching all that needs to burn, and he won't quit until it's all cleansed. God himself is Fire!

Hebrews 12:28-29 (MSG)

A "First-Love" Lesson from the Old Testament!

God spoke to Jacob: "Go back to Bethel. Stay there and build an altar to the God who revealed himself to you when you were running for your life from your brother Esau." Jacob told his family and all those who lived with him, "Throw out all the alien gods which you have, take a good bath and put on clean clothes, we're going to Bethel. I'm going to build an altar there to the God who answered me when I was in trouble and has stuck with me everywhere I've gone since."

Genesis 35:1-3 (MSG)

God revealed himself once again to Jacob... and blessed him: "Your name is Jacob (Heel); but that's your name no longer. From now on your name is Israel (God-Wrestler)."

