



As we look back on these winter months, we are reminded that even the harshest seasons have their purpose. Though the winds have blown cold and the days have felt long, your faithful prayers and generous financial support have been a steady warmth to this Christian ministry.

Because of you, men and women have found a safe place to speak honestly, to be heard with compassion, and to encounter the hope and healing that come through Christ. Your partnership allows us to continue offering counsel without fee schedules, trusting the Lord to provide through friends like you.

Winter never has the final word, for after winter comes Spring. We are blessed. We are encouraged. We thank the Lord, as we see individuals and couples moving from their winter into spring... restored relationships, renewed strength, and hearts beginning to hope again. You are part of that new growth!

Thank you for standing with us, for praying, for giving, and for believing that God uses this ministry to bring light into difficult places.

With gratitude and joy,  
John Charles (Sharon too)



## Warming the Cold

**Question:** It feels like the enthusiasm our family once had for the Christian life has cooled dramatically. Praying, reading Scripture, attending church... these all seem like chores. Weeks are going by without doing any of these things.

I'm scared. I don't want us to become hardened toward God. But I also don't want to just go through the motions with no joy in our hearts. Any suggestions?

**Response:** Throughout history, even well-known, influential Christian leaders have described times of discouragement, doubt, and apathy in their spiritual lives. People like C.S. Lewis, Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and many others went through periods of time when they struggled to maintain their fervent faith in God. In Matthew 24:12 & 13, we read that Jesus, when describing signs of His approaching return, said, *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

The dilemma in which you and your family members find yourselves is not abnormal. In fact, it was predicted by our Lord. The important thing to remember is that He understands and can help. In

Revelation 2:4 & 5, the accusation is made to the church that it has *left its first love*. But then, thankfully, a solution is given... **“repent and do your first works.”**

In order to repent, one must believe and acknowledge that they have done wrong. Sadly, we live in a time of history when almost everyone appears right *in their own eyes*. Personal sin is white-washed or denied altogether. Twenty-first-century culture is teaching us and our children that we should look out for ourselves and do whatever *feels* right to us. This is catapulting our society into the lawlessness that Jesus referred to and which we are witnessing across the world.

A good place to begin restoring spiritual zeal, is to take time to humbly confess our sins... our cold spirit... and ask God to restore a warm spirit in us.

Scripture urges us to confess those sins to God, and to each other (1 John 1:9, James 5:16). How long has it been since you expressed sincere regret over your sins to God, humbly in prayer?

Take time to reflect on the sins that have perhaps gone unchecked and unconfessed in your life: anger, jealousy, selfishness, laziness, lack of self-control, rudeness, lack of prioritizing God, doubt, lust, love of and indulgence in worldly lifestyles, critical attitudes, immoral activity, griping and complaining, worry, pessimism, unkindness, neglect of responsibility, cynicism, gossip, arguing, deception, dishonesty. Admit these to God and ask His forgiveness.

You may need to also ask forgiveness from individuals you have personally wronged. A clear conscience is an absolute necessity for restoring a warm heart toward the Lord.

Then, **CHOOSE** to ... revive, reinstate, restart... those things which you used to do in the past when your heart was more “on fire” for God. Don’t wait until you *feel* motivated. Just decide today to **start the day by committing it to Jesus.**

Listen to uplifting music and/or podcasts. Sing or hum along with the songs.



**Talk about God’s goodness.** Tell your family and friends about a lesson He’s teaching you.

**Read a portion of Scripture.**

**Pray...** talk with God frequently throughout the day.

**Memorize key verses** that build faith and review them often in your mind.



**Read biographies of Christians** who overcame times of struggle.

**Use your “screens”** to inspire rather than simply to inform or entertain.

**Help someone in need.** Supply food, hands-on help, monetary gifts, transportation, etc... Pray with, and for them.



**Choose to smile and be cheerful** at home and at work.

**Thank God repeatedly** for the many good things He provides.

**Quickly forgive** those who irritate/inconvenience/mistreat you.

**Immediately confess sin** to God when you slip up.

**Volunteer to serve**, in some way, at your church.

**Attend worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings,** events where you will hear solid Biblical teaching and be encouraged spiritually.

All of these practices are good to do, whether we feel strongly motivated to do them, or not. Let’s remember, happily, that repetition breeds the formation of good habits. And good habits breed renewed enthusiasm. **THAT’S** a warmly-rekindled heart for our Lord!

Written by  
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