

You've Lost it. Get it Back.
Restoring Your Spiritual Passion
Troy Knight

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NLT)

9 Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, 10 or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. 11 Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Revelation 2:1-5 (NLT)

1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands: 2 "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. 3 You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. 4 "But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! 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.

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

15 Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17 And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever had your car or ATV stuck in mud or snow? What caused you to get stuck? How did you get unstuck?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.** What did Paul mean when he wrote “those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God”? Why do so many people get confused about salvation?
- **Read Revelation 2:1-5.** Discuss Jesus’ evaluation of the church at Ephesus. How do you think Jesus would evaluate Generations Church? If Jesus was evaluating your walk with him what would be his complaint?
- **Read 1 John 2:15-17.** What happens when we try to love the things of the world and love God at the same time? According to v.17 what’s the solution to our problem? What does that look like in your life?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- What’s the difference between a spiritual rut and spiritual lostness?
- Describe a time you’ve been in a spiritual rut. What caused you to get out of it?
- Have you ever been lost but thought you were saved?
- If you’ve ever lost your spiritual passion, can you identify the reason? Was it the “Self induced” reason, where you fell in love with sin? Or was it a reaction to God induced trials and testing? (**Read Job 7:11-16**)
- What one thing can you do to restore your spiritual passion and to love God with your whole heart? How can our small group help you with this?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Take a step this week to restore, strengthen or affirm your spiritual passion.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that each member of your small group puts love and passion for God first and foremost in his or her life. Pray that He helps them if they are struggling with the desires and concerns of this world.

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "How can I overcome spiritual apathy?"

Answer: Spiritual apathy, coldness, or indifference can affect even the most sincere Christian at one time or another. Human emotions being as fickle as they are, feelings of apathy or disinterest can sometimes replace the fervor we once felt for the things of God. Overcoming such apathy is necessary for continuing our walk with God.

The one who realizes he is spiritually apathetic needs to, first of all, make sure he is a true believer in Jesus Christ (see 1 John 5:13; Romans 8:16). If he knows that he is a true believer in Christ, he needs to then ask himself this question: "What caused me to lose my love and passion for the Lord?"

One cause of spiritual apathy is sin in the believer's life. When David sinned, he felt separated from God (Psalm 51:11). As he confessed his sin to God, David prayed for God to "renew a steadfast spirit" within him (verse 10), and he had this request: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (verse 12). A believer who feels spiritually apathetic should confess any known sin and ask for God's cleansing and renewal.

Another cause of spiritual apathy is allowing dead orthodoxy to replace a true love for the Lord. A Christian is to be marked by his love for and obedience to Jesus (John 14:21), but it is possible to obey without love. It is possible to cling to the truth and serve God yet do so in a loveless, lifeless fashion. Such mechanical service is not pleasing to God. This was the Lord's condemnation of the Ephesian church in Revelation 2:4: "You have forsaken the love you had at first." When Paul wrote to the same church around AD 60, he commended them for their love (Ephesians 1:15–16), but now, some thirty years later, they had left their first love. Their passion had waned. Why? Perhaps the Ephesians had begun to take for granted what they had in Christ. Living for Christ was no longer a daily adventure; it was becoming "boring," and they were losing sight of their eternal purpose. The church at Ephesus knew the teachings of Christ, but they were not living in His power. In so doing they lost their vibrant love and passion for Christ.

What's the solution, then, for turning spiritual apathy into a renewed love and passion for Jesus Christ? The word to the spiritually apathetic Ephesian church was, "Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first" (Revelation 2:4). The spiritually apathetic person needs to *remember*, *repent*, and *renew*.

First, the spiritually apathetic person needs to *remember*; that is, he should think back to the time when he sensed the warmth and closeness of Christ's presence. He should realize that he can return to that state of fellowship. Then he needs to *repent*; that is, he needs to see his spiritual apathy as sin and confess that sin to God (1 John 1:9). Finally, he needs to *renew*; that is, he must cultivate a renewed commitment to the Lord—not just serving the Lord, but knowing Him, praising Him, and fellowshiping with Him. He should start again, if he has discontinued it, daily Bible reading and prayer. He should let the indwelling Holy Spirit empower him so his life will display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). And he should fellowship with a Bible-believing local church (Hebrews 10:25).

Satan loves apathy. We must stay alert to the temptations of the old nature, the world, and the evil one. We must never lose the sense that God is always with us and in us. "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). As we begin to worship and praise the Lord and let Christ control our lives each day, we will rediscover a life of adventure filled with joy and eternal purpose. We will wonder how we ever became spiritually apathetic in the first place.