

## Ephesus Backwards

I. Introduction: In this lesson, we will be looking at what John wrote concerning the congregation in Ephesus (**Revelation 2:1-7**). From that, we will be talking about how the local body of Christ today cannot take the cautionary lesson of Ephesus and go to the other extreme. Ephesus was the guilty party of a loveless marriage with the Lord. Their works were good! The motivation of those works was the problem.

A. Our Lord desires that we love Him and our neighbors (**Mark 12:28-34**).

1. All things are to be done with love (**I Corinthians 16:13-14**).
2. Love is the bond of perfectness (**Colossians 3:10-14**).
3. It is certainly right to emphasize love (**I Peter 4:8**).

B. You can do all the right things, but if love is not the motivator; those actions are vain (**I Corinthians 13:1-3**).

1. The person who gives to the poor for a tax write off instead of out of love.
  - a. People do “good works” for a show sometimes (**Psalms 28:3**).
  - b. That is not sincere [unfeigned] love (cf. **I Peter 1:22**).
2. The person who “does good” (**Galatians 6:10**) only because he or she is expected to do it. Going through the motions isn’t right.

II. Body: We Cannot Become Ephesus Backwards - Essentially Most In Sardis (**Revelation 3:1-6**).

A. Love is not inactive (**Galatians 5:6**).

1. By love we serve one another (**Galatians 5:13-14**).
2. Love is visible through actions (**II Corinthians 8:24, Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 3:19, Hebrews 12:6, I John 3:16-18, II John 1:6, and Revelation 3:19**).
3. Love is not hypocritical (**Luke 16:13 and Romans 12:9**).

B. We cannot have love and become the opposite of Ephesus and err because we do nothing about sin from within the congregation (**Revelation 2:18-23**).

1. What was said to the congregation in Corinth about this (**I Corinthians 5:1-8**)?
2. Think about what was written to the church in Pergamos (**Revelation 2:12-17**).
3. We cannot allow such doubts as were cast upon the church in Corinth to be about us (**II Corinthians 11:1-4**).

C. We cannot become the contrast to Ephesus and all of a sudden be afraid to expose liars (**Titus 1:10-14**).

1. We have to have, because of our love for God, the right mentality (**Psalms 97:10, Proverbs 28:4, John 2:13-17, I Timothy 6:11-12, and Jude 1:3-4; 1:21**).

2. Like Christ (**John 3:19-21**), being the light carries the natural role of exposing darkness (**Ephesians 5:6-11**).

D. The Ephesians endured, labored, and did not faint. We cannot use the love they missed to become quitters who cease to work because we are tired (**Galatians 6:9** and **II Thessalonians 3:13**).

1. It is easy to become too relaxed (**Amos 6:1**).

2. Stay diligent even when you're not in the midst of battle (**Hebrews 6:9-12**).

3. We cannot think we can live off of the good works we did yesterday, last year, twenty years ago, etc. (**Titus 3:8; 3:14**).

4. Remember, God is not looking for us to seek the minimum requirements (**Matthew 5:41, Philemon 1:21, and I Thessalonians 4:1-2**).

5. When Christ returns, we don't want to be just chillin' (**I Thessalonians 5:1-3**).

III. Conclusion: The word love is so abused in our generation. The idea of being loving is most often married to compromise and indifference. Biblical love is nothing like the modern concepts we see in our society. Let's pattern our love after our Lord, as revealed through the Scriptures (**II Timothy 1:13; 3:15-17**) rather than the world (**Romans 12:2**). Don't be the Ephesus backwards people!