

**Articles and Sermons :: The Priority of Relationship by Charles Stanley****The Priority of Relationship by Charles Stanley - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/3/23 20:10**

Ephesus was the home of a tremendous ministry. Despite harsh persecution, the church planted by Paul endured opposition, spread the gospel, and was quick to challenge false prophets. But 30 years after the apostle left, John's revelation included a stern warning for those believers.

Imagine how the words of Revelation 2 must have struck the Ephesians when they read them. After complimenting their service to the gospel, Christ said, "But I have this against you . . ." That phrase was no doubt extremely disconcerting. The Lord warned them that they had left their first love. In other words, all of their work was being done with wrong motives.

Christ called the Ephesians to remember their love for Him and their delight in His salvation. Service is no substitute for an intimate relationship, but modern believers continue to fall into this subtle trap. The commendable things that we do count for nothing unless they stem from a vibrant personal connection with God. Our work can't be effective or fruitful unless He is in it.

In fact, God is more interested in you and your personal relationship with Him than in a thousand lifetimes of good works. He desires to be the satisfaction and delight of His children so that their service is a result of loving devotion.

There are plenty of wrong reasons to labor for the kingdom. However, God is satisfied only with service motivated by love for Him. He wants those with selfish intentions to return to their first love. In that way, hearts and minds can be renewed, and service to the Lord will be more fruitful.

Re: The Priority of Relationship by Charles Stanley - posted by ManofGod0000, on: 2011/3/23 20:13

Absolutely wonderful post, wonderful message, and to actually know that God, the creator of all things cares just that much for me. Wow! I am still in awe