

Beware of Slowly Drifting From Your First Love of Jesus



Left - Aerial View of Ephesus - [Blue Circle](#) marks ruins of city with harbor 2 miles away!
Right - View toward the west with marshes & then the ocean (hard to see) ([Source](#))

'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love'

-- The Lord Jesus Christ

*"The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand,
the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands"*
(Revelation 2:1,4+)

WATCH OUT FOR THE SLOW DRIFT - [Ephesus](#) (see history) had a great harbor on the [CAYSTER RIVER](#) - "The ancient city of [Ephesus](#) was once an important [port](#) on the river,^[1] but over the centuries, [sedimentation](#) gradually filled in the inlet around the city." ([Wikipedia](#)) See the pictures above which show that today the "harbor" is 2 miles from the ruins of the once great city! One of the greatest cities of the ancient world, ruined by the slow accumulation of one tiny grain of sand after another! What a powerful lesson this holds for all believers of the danger of slowly drifting from the first love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, is the tragic story of once mighty Ephesus not a picture of how "LITTLE SINS" can slowly, imperceptibly drift like *sediment* into our life over days, months, years? That's a rhetorical question of course! We all need to pray for God to **catch the little foxes** before they completely corrupt the vineyard of our heart (Song 2:15⁺) and we find ourselves far removed from our **first love** of Jesus and the spiritual riches we have in Him, even as Ephesus became far removed from the harbor which brought her great earthly riches.

What sin is laying down *sediment* so to speak in your (my) heart and impeding the flow of the **rivers of living water** from your innermost being (i.e., the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit - Jn 7:38-39⁺)? We need to remember that sin is very deceitful (Heb 3:13⁺) and can even convince us that "LITTLE" sins will never take a **BIG** toll on our spiritual life and love for Jesus! Wrong!

Paul warns (commands) us not to continue to be deceived (by the deceitfulness of sin) **'Do not be deceived** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows (even "little" sins), this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (i.e., "*sin sediment*" slowly building up and blocking the outflow of the Spirit's mighty rushing rivers from our heart and slowly eroding our first love for Jesus!), but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life (and mighty rushing rivers and ever increasing love for Jesus, both energized by the Spirit - Jn 16:14)." (Gal 6:7-8⁺)

By God's grace and for His glory, may His Holy Spirit enable each of us to continually kill the "*little foxes*" lest they corrupt and kill our soul (Ro 8:13⁺, 1Pe 2:11+, James 1:15,16+), and may He enable us to continually keep our first love for Jesus at full flame (cf 2Ti 1:6ESV+). In the mighty Name of the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Rev 1:8,17+, Rev 22:13+). Amen. (See [Expulsive Power of Returning to Your First Love](#))

And if we need additional motivation to kill the "LITTLE" sins that are laying down sediment in the rivers flowing from our heart, the writer of Hebrews adds "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us (Hebrews 11:1-40), let us also lay aside every encumbrance and **the sin which so easily entangles us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus** the Author and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (See [Vertical Vision](#))." (Hebrews 12:1-2⁺)

Now take a moment to worship Him and sing this old hymn as your prayer to Him: **More Love to Thee**, written by Elizabeth Prentiss (powerful [story behind her hymn](#)) and sung by Fernando Ortega...

[More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!](#)

Hear Thou the prayer I make
On bended knee;

This is my earnest plea:
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee,
More love to Thee!

Once earthly joy I craved,
Sought peace and rest;
Now Thee alone I seek—
Give what is best;
This all my prayer shall be:
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee,
More love to Thee!

(This Stanza was not sung)

*Let sorrow do its work,
come grief or pain;
Sweet are Thy messengers,
sweet their refrain,
When they can sing with me:
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee!
More love to Thee!*

Then shall my latest breath
Whisper Thy praise;
This be the parting cry
My heart shall raise;
This still its prayer shall be:
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee,
More love to Thee!

"More love to Thee, O Christ! More love to Thee" by Elizabeth Prentiss (1818-1878) who was born in Portland, Me., 1818, and in 1845 became the wife of George L. Prentiss, D. D., who later became Professor of Theology at the Union Seminary, New York City. For much of her life she lived the life of a near invalid, her body often wracked with pain. It was during these times that she had to refocus her understanding of her own value and worth from **doing to being**: "*I see now that to live for God, whether one is allowed ability to be actively useful or not, is a great thing, and that it is a wonderful mercy to be allowed even to suffer, if thereby one can glorify Him.*"

"More Love to Thee O Christ" emerged out of a time of personal tragedy. While ministering to a church in New York City during the 1850s, the Prentiss' lost a child. Then a short time later their youngest child also died. For weeks, Elizabeth was inconsolable, and in her diary she wrote, "*Empty hands, a worn-out, exhausted body, and unutterable longings to flee from a world that has so many sharp experiences.*" From her broken heart came this touching poem:

One child and two green graves are mine,
This is God's gift to me;
A bleeding, fainting, broken heart,
This is my gift to Thee.

During this period of grief, Mrs. Prentiss began meditating upon the story of Jacob in the Old Testament, and how God met him in a very special way during his moments of sorrow and deepest need. She prayed earnestly that she too might have a similar experience. (Ge 28:11–19) Inspired by Sarah Adams' hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Prentiss began to write her own hymn in an almost identical metrical pattern, for as she meditated on God's Word, she began writing all four stanzas of her hymn in a single evening, but evidently did not think very highly of her work, and did not show the poem to anyone, not even her husband, for the next thirteen years. Finally, in 1869 the poem appeared in leaflet form and in 1870 was published for the first time in a hymnal, *Songs of Devotion for Christian Associations*. Stanza three ([above](#)) reflects most clearly the autobiographical context out of which the hymn comes. When Howard Doane saw the words, he put them to music that became a beloved gospel song. The first verse expresses her earnest desire: More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!

Elizabeth Prentiss repeats "More love to thee" 13 times. This repetition provides the singer with that sense of intimacy with Christ for which this era of hymnody is so known. Prentiss wrote,

*"To love Christ more is the deepest need, the constant cry of the soul...out in the woods, and on my bed, and out driving, when I am happy and busy, and when I am sad and idle, **the whisper keeps going up for more love, more love, more love!**"*

THOUGHT - LORD God, let this same blessed whispering refrain be our constant cry **"More love to Thee, O Christ."** In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Related Resources:

- [Are You Beginning to Backslide?](#)
- [Are You Entangled?](#)
- Revelation 2:1-7 Commentary