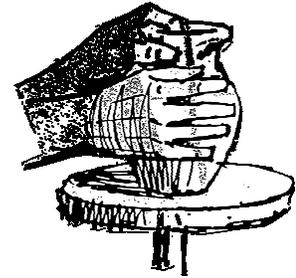


His Workmanship: Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works."*

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

The Love You Had at First, by Berry Kercheville

Have you ever known a couple who were once madly in love but are now distant and cold? When the wedding vows are said, life is full of hope, but too often something tragic happens, and people who once couldn't imagine being apart are now living a marriage that is stale, mechanical, and routine. Facades are erected, pleasantries exchanged, public appearances made, but the passion is gone.

As terrible as that is, even more tragic is when the same thing happens with our love for Christ. When we came to Christ, we were truly excited. Bible study was life-changing, prayer was deep and intimate, and worship was special. What has happened since that time? For many, the love for Christ began to fluctuate. Cares of the world pressed in, and soon the intensity, fervor, and passion were gone, and then the love for Christ grew stale, mechanical, and routine. That is a picture of the church at Ephesus, Rev 2:1-7, which had earlier received the astounding letter about the ideal church from Paul.

Ephesus: An Extraordinary Church.

Would we have noticed anything amiss at the Ephesian church? Consider that Ephesus was an active church. People didn't just "go to

church." Jesus said, *"I know your labor..."* Rev 2:2. The Greek word means they labored to the point of exhaustion. They had endurance. They did not tolerate false teaching and would not allow those who were evil into the church. They even endured patiently for Christ's name's sake, which implies that they steadfastly stood up for the gospel and did not grow weary in doing so. Doesn't that sound like everything a church should be? Would anyone today level a complaint against the Ephesus church? Jesus did, but not just a complaint, a reason for Him to divorce the Ephesus church: *"I will remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent,"* 2:5.

Look at it this way. Husbands, suppose your wife said to you, *"I respect you, but I certainly do not love you like I did when we were married. So, for the sake of the children and the community, I'm going to stay with you. I will cook, rear the kids, and keep the house. I will talk to you as a friend, but since I do not love you any more, please just keep our relationship as friends."* Would you accept that?

When we look at our relationship with Christ from the point of view of being married to Him, have we left the love we had at first? Loving God is the greatest commandment. God

does not accept loving Him a little, loving Him mostly, loving Him as just a friend, or loving Him almost as much as we love something else. It is loving with *all...*

Falling in Love Again: Remember.

Jesus gave the prescription for falling in love again, vs. 5-6. The first step is to remember from where we have fallen. What was it like when we first came to Christ? It was joy and peace to know that we were forgiven, that we had a whole new life to live, and that we were released from the former bondage of sin. Didn't you love Bible study? When I was a new Christian, I worked an evening shift. I loved it because I could get up around 8 am and study until 3 pm before I had to get ready for work. The hours seemed like minutes. I couldn't wait to talk with others about the scriptures. When I was at gatherings with other Christians, I was always hoping we could talk about the Bible instead of football and politics.

Even if your experience was not the same as mine, it is still important to remember what *love* is really about. Just like when we were dating and first married, we did not put a clock on how much time we spent with each other.

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**“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise,”
—Psalm 51:17**

continued from p. 1

So with loving the Lord—we don’t notice how much time we spend in study and prayer and discussing the word. We are so swallowed up in it that we hate it when we have to stop and we wait eagerly with anticipation for when we can go back to God’s presence. We have a hunger and thirst for Him that cannot be quenched.

Falling in Love Again: Repent. Repent was Jesus’s second admonition. To repent we must realize that something or someone has replaced our first love. It is not that we do not have a first love, it is that we have a new first love. There is something we enjoy more than God. If this were marriage, what would our spouse say about our new love? It’s got to go! How do you kick the new love out? (1) Motivation: the Lord is going to divorce us. It is critical for us to understand how serious our sin is. (2) Confession: we pray and confess the sin of putting the Lord in second place. (3) Return: we turn to face Him, we change our schedule so we have time to pursue Him, and we learn to love Him all over again.

Falling in Love Again: Do the First Works. To recover our passion, we must actively do what we did at the beginning of our love. Were we attentive? Did we listen? Did we give gifts? Did we spend time together? Did we do little tasks for the other? Did we say words of affection and kindness?

How did we conduct our romance at the first? This is the way to rekindle the fire in our relationship with Christ. We are getting to know each other and to appreciate each other. We find out the things we like and admire in one another. We approve of the way our loved one speaks, acts, dresses. We are constantly looking for ways to please the one we love. We acknowledge the strengths—and weaknesses—of one another. We spend as much time together as we can. We learn to respect, nurture, and understand one another, to provide, support, and protect each other. We enjoy doing things together—working and playing. We make plans together for the future. We build hope, courage, faith, and trust in one another. We find peace, security, ease, comfort, contentment, harmony in one another. We give one another purpose. We even challenge each other, Pr 27:17, and help each other to grow, discover, create, become aware.

Do you remember Paul’s instructions concerning marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33? “*Wives submit to your husbands... husbands love your wives,*” etc. Actually, those aren’t primarily instructions about marriage. In v. 32, Paul told us that he was speaking of Christ and the church. Therefore, it is primarily a picture of love between the church (us) and Jesus based on what we understand about marriage. So here is how

I understand marriage, and I’m assuming everyone understands it the same way

Every night before I go to bed, I say, “*Teresa, here is how I want tomorrow to go. You will get up 30 minutes before me, fix my breakfast, and make my lunch. After I leave for work, you will clean the kitchen and the floors, do the laundry, and have it all folded neatly in my drawer exactly the way you know I like it. Then I want you to go to the store and buy food for tonight—here is a list and here is how I want it made. When I come home, I expect dinner to be ready no later than 15 minutes after I arrive. After dinner, I want you to sit on the couch with me and tell me how much you love me.*” That’s the way marriage ought to go, right? If we think the above is silly (I hope so), then we ought to know how silly it is to think that attitude is the kind of relationship the Lord desires of us. Here is the key: we do not read the scriptures to know commands and the right way to worship and the correct position on issues. No. We read the scriptures primarily to know God. The better we know God, the more we will love Him. As the song goes, “To Know, Know, Know Him Is to Love, Love, Love Him.” And the more we love Him, the more abundant our life will be. “*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent,*” Jn 17:3. The more we love Him, the more we will want to please Him and experience the joy of being in love with our eternal Husband.

God’s Love Is Timeless and Unfailing

God’s love is timeless and unfailing. He says: “*I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With that unfailing love I have drawn you to Myself,*” Jer 31:3. How did God demonstrate His love for us? “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,*” Rm 5:8. Over and over, the Bible says that God’s mercy, His loving-kindness, endures forever—it is everlasting: 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Ps 106:1; 107:1; 118:1-4, 29; 136:1-26 (26 times!); and 138:8; Jer 33:11. Is 54:8.

“I will mention the loving-kindnesses and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us... according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses. So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old,” Is 64:7-9. So, then, what do we do with this love? “*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love,*” 1 Jn 4:7-8. Did you read that? God is love.



God makes my heart clean in 2015 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” —Ps 51:10

50 Shades of Grey, from p. 4
As a doctor, I’m urging you: DON’T see Fifty Shades of Grey. Get informed, learn the facts, and explain to your friends why they shouldn’t see it either. Here are a few of the dangerous ideas promoted by Fifty Shades of Grey:

1. Girls want guys like Christian who order them around and get rough. No! A psychologically healthy woman avoids pain. She wants to feel safe, respected, and cared for by a man she can trust. She dreams about a happy family, not handcuffs.

2. Guys want a girl like Anastasia who is meek and insecure. Wrong. A psychologically healthy man wants a woman who can stand up for herself. If he is out of line, he wants her to set him straight.

3. Anastasia exercises free choice when she consents to being hurt, so no one can judge her decision. Flawed logic. Sure, Anastasia had free choice—but she chose poorly. A self-destructive decision is a bad decision. Easy to judge, and we should make righteous judgments, Jn 7:24.

4. Anastasia makes choices about Christian in a thoughtful and detached manner. Not! Christian constantly supplies Anastasia with alcohol, impairing her judgment. Also, Anastasia becomes sexually active with Christian—her first experience ever—soon after meeting him. Neuroscience suggests their intimacy

Travel Judy Sartin is in FL with family; her birthday was yesterday.

could jump start her feelings of attachment and trust before she’s certain he deserved them. Sex is a powerful experience—particularly the first time. Finally, Christian manipulates Anastasia into signing an agreement prohibiting her from telling anyone that he is a long time abuser. Alcohol, sex, manipulation—hardly the ingredients of a thoughtful, detached decision.

5. Christian’s emotional problems are cured by Anastasia’s love. Only in a movie. In the real world, Christian wouldn’t change to any significant degree. If Anastasia was fulfilled by helping emotionally disturbed people, she should have become a psychiatrist or social worker.

6. It’s good to experiment with sexuality. Maybe for adults in a healthy, long term, committed, monogamous relationship, AKA “marriage.” Otherwise, you’re at high risk for pregnancy, STDs, emotional devastation, and sexual assault. Be wise, very careful whom you allow to get close to you, physically and emotionally, because just one encounter can throw you off track and change your life forever.

The bottom line: the ideas of Fifty Shades of Grey are dangerous and can lead to confusion and poor decisions about love. There are vast differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, but the movie blurs those differences (makes them gray), so you begin to wonder: what’s healthy in a relationship? What’s sick? There are so many shades of gray...I’m not sure.

Hey, it’s your safety and future we’re talking about here. There’s no room for doubt: an intimate relationship that includes violence, consensual or not, is completely unacceptable.

This is black and white. There are no shades of gray here. Not even one.

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

·**Monica Thompson**—passed kidney stone

·**Maggie Tope**—recovering from tonsillectomy

·**Christine Adams’s husband Chuck**—shingles;

PRAISE: 9 mo-old grandson, **Ezekiel**—returned home to his mother **Kayla Knighten**

·**Sandra Perry**—kidney failure, may need dialysis or transplant; heart valve issues recently diagnosed; neuropathy from diabetes

·**Tyler Huelsman**—car accident; asks prayers for spiritual strength

·**Frank Savarese**—recovering from surgery on salivary gland; to return to work tomorrow

·**Samantha Harrod**—recovering from drainage of cyst infection, pain; may need further surgery

·**Bill Dennis**—in rehab following infected knee drainage; weak heart; pseudo-gout

·**Ed Fink**—prostate cancer; treatment for brain tumors

·**Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, at St. Jude’s in Memphis for brain cancer treatment; donate at www.youcaring.com, type her name at top

·**Judy Strand**—hep C; on liver transplant list

·**Chris Bennett**, former member—all tools for biz stolen; recovering from fall, fractured pelvis

·**Buford Wrather, Cheryl Reames’s dad**—stroke, complicated by Parkinson’s; in CO Springs

·**Sylvia Chapman, Brett’s grandmother**—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo

·**Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis

·**Brittany Tope’s mother**—breast cancer in spine; pain in broken ribs which tumor has injured; grandmother—on dialysis

·**Pat Wilkes**—knee pain; bursar impingement and tom tendon on right shoulder causing severe pain

·**Johnny Horton**—improving, may return home soon

·**Sharon Rupinen, Sandra Perry’s sister**—surgery recovery

·**Kenny Boyd’s coworker Kim Phillips**—asks our prayers for heart problems

·**Rick Robbins**, friend of Howells—brain surgery

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Tim Huelsman—asthma

Bill Dennis—adjusting pacemaker and meds

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease

Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome

Hannah Huelsman—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain

Kirk Johnson—MS

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;

Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Directory Brian and Megan Shreve have

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Exposing current thoughts & trends *moral equivalency*

6 Dangerous Ideas in Fifty Shades of Grey

Miriam Grossman, MD, a medical doctor with training in pediatrics and in the specialty of child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry, wrote a letter listing out all the reasons why the movie Fifty Shades of Grey could be harmful to viewers:

There's nothing gray about Fifty Shades of Grey. It's all black. Let me explain. I help people who are broken inside. Unlike doctors who use x-rays or blood tests to determine why someone's in pain, the wounds that interest me are hidden. I ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. That's how I discover why the person in front of me is "bleeding."

Years of careful listening have taught me a lot. One thing I've learned is that young people are utterly confused about love—finding it and keeping it. They make poor choices and end up in lots of pain. I don't want you to suffer like the people I see in my office, so I'm warning you about the movie Fifty Shades of Grey. Even if you don't see the film, its toxic message is seeping into our culture and could plant dangerous ideas in your head.

Fifty Shades of Grey was released for Valentine's Day, so you'd think it's a romance, but don't fall for it. The movie is actually about a sick, dangerous relationship filled with physical and emotional abuse. It seems glamorous, because the actors are gorgeous, have expensive cars and planes, and Beyonce is singing. [It spells grey in an English, not American, accent, to make it seem more sophisticated, like in a perfume commercial.] You might conclude that Christian and Ana are cool, and that their relationship is acceptable. Don't allow yourself to be manipulated! The people behind the movie just want your money; they have no concern whatsoever about you and your dreams. Abuse is not glamorous or cool. It is never OK, under any circumstances.

This is what you need to know about Fifty Shades of Grey: as a child, Christian Grey was terribly neglected. He is confused about love because he never experienced the real thing. In his mind, love is tangled up with bad feelings like pain and embarrassment. Christian enjoys hurting women in bizarre ways. Anastasia is an immature girl who falls for Christian's looks and wealth and foolishly goes along with his desires. In the real world, this story would end badly, with Christian in jail and Ana in a shelter—or a morgue. Or Christian would continue beating Ana, and she'd stay and suffer. Either way, their lives would most definitely not be a fairy tale. Trust me on this.

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meets at
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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, Lesson 4, "I Have Become A Christian! Now What?" Jim Reingrover

- **Sermon**, "Peter's Epistle to Westside: 1 Peter 2-3, Submission," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **Questions answered**, "Why did Jesus cry in Gethsemane?" Jim Reingrover

Wednesday night class: Daniel: Determined to Walk with God, chapter 7

Feeding on His Word Reading

Everyone is invited to an open Bible reading of Ezra, Zephaniah, & Haggai this evening at 4 pm, light supper to follow, at the Howells' home. See **Joel Walker** for schedule.