

# Re-ignite the Fire: Fall in Love with God's Word All Over Again!

A sermon based on Psalm 119:33-35

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

"I've just fallen out of love with you." "You've changed." "You're just not the same person you were 15 years ago." "We're just not into each other anymore." Maybe you've heard those excuses before. Those are some of the common reasons why many marriages today fail and break up.

The world is ok with those excuses. But we know differently. We know that love isn't just some feeling or emotion, that can leave as quickly as it comes. A marriage takes work. It takes time. It's the actions that really show the love. If your marriage is going through some rocky times, you don't just let it fizzle out. You do something about it.

Now, maybe it's just me, but over the years, I've noticed more and more opportunities opening up for couples to strengthen their marriage, whether it's couple counseling, renewing marriage vows, marriage retreats, to name a few. It's all about keeping the fire for each other alive and burning, and when it starts to flicker, throwing some tinder on it to rekindle it.

"I've fallen out of love with you." "We've changed." "I'm just not into you anymore." Friends, this morning, as we focus on Christian education, the question I want to pose to you is this: Has that become your attitude towards continuing your Christian education?

You see, I think sometimes we tend to have a misunderstanding about what Christian education is really all about. It's not just Sunday School or a Christian day school. It's not just doing the classwork to get through Catechism class, and then, once we hit Confirmation, we're done.

No, Christian education is different from any formal education you've ever had before. It's not over once you hit your "goal" of graduating, where you can finally throw all of those textbooks into the corner, starting your dust collection, never to open them again. You can't ever truly master the materials...God's Word. Christian education is ongoing. Christian education is for every believer of every age, you and me included.

And, so that means you and I are perpetual students of God's Word, continually striving to grow in our faith, learn from his Word, put it into practice in our lives. We should want to know our God better. We should want to know his Word better.

It's really not unlike two people in a marriage. It's not, hey, now we got hitched, let's set this thing on cruise control...just call me when dinner's ready. Marriage takes work. It takes effort from both sides. Marriage is a lifetime of growing with your spouse, learning more about them, and putting what you learn into practice as you not just say "I love you" but show "I love you" by what you do.

Well, today, I would like to propose to you that our relationship with God and, especially, his Word, that our Christian education is just like a marriage. What do you think? A fair comparison? If that's the case, then the question that begs to be asked is this: how's the relationship?

Are you still madly in love with God, like he is with you? Are you still madly in love with God's Word, wanting to know it better? Or, does your fire need to be reignited?

You see, God isn't the one who has changed. Not one bit. But I have. You have. Just look again at our verses from Psalm 119, "Teach me to follow your decrees, and I will keep them to the end...Give me understanding, and I will obey [your law] with all my heart...Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight."

Friends, those are promises. Those are our vows. God's kept his side, using his Word to teach us, give us understanding, certainly to direct us in godly living. But how faithful have we been on our part?

You know, there's one word in this entire section that sticks out to me, and maybe it does to you, too. Can you see it? The word is delight. How many of you would say 'delight' is the first word that comes to mind when you think about God's Word and his commands? Sadly, not me.

Why not? What's happened? I see the children running out of Sunday School, so enthusiastic and excited to share the Bible story they learned that day, how they were taught something completely new about their God. And maybe you were that way when you were younger. But I've never seen an adult, myself included, hop out of their seats after a Sunday sermon or Bible Class, just bubbling, "Today, God, in his Word, taught me all about church discipline, winning a falling brother or sister in Christ back to the family, back to repentance, and I'm just so thankful and excited to be learning, whether it's something new or reviewing something I had forgotten. I can't wait to go back next week!"

Why not? Is it what I call the "post-graduation exhaustion," when you're fresh out of college, or the seminary, and having spent the past almost 20 years studying and learning, and you just need a break? Or that I already graduated, got confirmed, so that means I know the Bible already. There's nothing new in here for me.

Does the material not excite you? Is God's Word too boring? Do you feel it takes too much time to continue your Bible education? That extra hour could be better spent somewhere else?

Or maybe it's this...in our 2nd lesson, Peter writes about how God's Word contains some hard things to understand. So, for you, does it come down to willingness? Am I willing to be taught from God's Word for those difficult teachings? Or do I want to continue in my opinion of what I think Scripture ought to say? Do I want to learn from God's Word and obey it, especially the law, when it's in my face, telling me I'm sinful?

Friends, as we saw over the past several weeks in studying the 10 Commandments, it starts with attitude. What's yours? Where is your heart? Where has the delight gone?

Honestly, the answer is going to be different for every one of us. But the truth is, the delight, the fire, the love for God and, especially, for his Word is either gone or fading because of sin. Satan, trying to grab hold of us and break the marriage. Satan, whispering in your ears, "You don't need that. You don't need God. You don't need his Word. You don't need him nagging you, telling you every moment how you should be living, and then getting on your case every time you screw up." Satan, desperately trying to snuff out the fire in that relationship so that he can start an exclusive relationship with every one of us...in the fires of hell.

It should be God saying to us, "You've changed. You're falling out of love with me. You're not the same person you were how many years ago, back when you really loved my Word..."

I don't want that. You don't want that. God doesn't want that. It's time to get help. Today, right now, attend a retreat with the love of your life. The main topic? Salvation.

Isn't that what Christian education is all about? It all points to salvation. It's all about Jesus. It's all about love. It's about learning the greatest news there is. Yes, when I study God's Word, I come face to face with my sins. But I also come face to face with my Savior.

He lived. Jesus didn't just live as a regular human being. He was different. Though he was tempted, he was sinless. He was perfect. He died. He was perfect, but we aren't. So love drove Jesus to the cross, where he died, bearing all of our sins and forgiving all our sins. He rose. The proof that right now, we each have a place in heaven. The proof that every one of us will live because Jesus lives and has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

That's what Christian education is all about. Everything points to Christ. We might not always delight in him or in his words, but his delight has always been us. He's been devoted to us, through thick and thin. And when our fire may have been dwindling, his never stopped burning.

That's what Christian education is all about. Yes, the story isn't new, but it certainly never gets old. I can hear about the forgiveness I have in Jesus in a sermon week after week after week and the message never stops comforting me.

And if that's the case, how could we not delight in God's Word? How could we not delight in continuing to hear God's Word, to read it, to study it, to learn it? Our motivation certainly isn't lacking. Just look at what the verse prior to our sections says, "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free. That's our motivation! Our hearts are set free, won from the fires, and now they have been set on fire for God.

Our loving God has given us a precious trust in the form of his Word, and you and I get to guard it. That doesn't mean hiding it in the closet so no one can get to it, including you. No, he wants us to fall in love with him all over again. He wants to be in his Word because that's where a strong and loving relationship with God is nurtured, through a continued study of his Word.

Friends, as we begin another "school year" here at Light of the World, it's time to rekindle that fire. It's time to open that Bible back up. It's time to fall in love with your loving God all over again. And here's how you can do it...

Step 1 - Repent of the sin. I've stayed away from you for far too long, God. I haven't desired to have that same relationship with you as you want with me, that you've done everything you could, including sacrificing your own Son, so you could be with me.

Step 2 – Appreciate and love the forgiveness you have in Christ. You have been set free from sin. You're free! You're free to have that exclusive relationship with your Lord.

Step 3 - Make the time for God. He's got all the time in the world for you! Nothing else is more important in this life than God. Time spent with God in his Word is time well spent. I guarantee it!

Step 4 – And this one's simple. Open up your Bible and read it. When you have questions that life poses, look to Scripture. When you can't seem to find the answers, ask your pastor. There's nothing more that I love than to have you ask me questions about God's Word. I spent 8 years training for this.

I'm still training for this. And plus, I love when a person's question drives me back to God's Word so I can grow as I search for answers.

Step 5 - Enjoy it. No pleasure this world gives you can even begin to compare to the sweet treasures God's Word holds. It's our delight to find them.

"You're changed. You're not the same person you were how many years ago." Friends, it's true. God's love for us hasn't changed. The message of our salvation will never change. But we've changed. Christian education isn't just for children. It's for me. It's for you. And you know what, that's exciting. Now, we want to be in God's Word. Now, we want to grow stronger in our faith and in our relationship with Jesus. And so, this year, make the promise. Fall in love with God and his Word all over again. The Teacher is waiting, and he's delighted to share his truths with us. And we're delighted to learn from him. Amen.