

# Beware of Slowly Drifting From Your First Love of Jesus

Aerial View of Ephesus - **Blue Circle** marks ruins of city with harbor 2 miles away!

View of Ephesus looking toward the west with marshes & then 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,<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

*Be killing sin  
or it will be killing you.*

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's Spirit to continually enable us "**catch the little foxes**" before they completely corrupt the vineyard of our heart (Song 2:15<sup>+</sup>; cf Pr 4:23+) and we find ourselves far removed from our **first love** of Jesus (Rev 2:4+) and the spiritual riches we have in Him, even as Ephesus became far removed from the harbor which brought her great earthly riches. Little foxes in the picture look cute, but little foxes masquerading as sin can corrupt and kill, so by the Spirit's power, we need to be not just catching but killing these "little foxes!" As John Owen asked "Do you mortify? (Col 3:5<sup>+</sup>) Do you make it your DAILY work? Be ALWAYS at it whilst you live; cease not a day **ED**: OR A NIGHT - BE ESPECIALLY VIGILANT WHEN IT GETS DARK!) from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." (See under point #1 - [Of the Mortification of Sin](#))

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<sup>+</sup>)? We need to remember that sin is very deceitful (Heb 3:13<sup>+</sup>) 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 us (not a suggestion, a command) not to continue to be deceived (by the deceitfulness of sin - which implies they were being deceived. Are you? Am I?) "**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<sup>+</sup>)

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<sup>+</sup>, 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!

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“**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.

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**Harmless Little Sins - Little Acts of Disobedience** - What happened to the great city of Ephesus? Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana. What happened to bring about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes? No, silt was the reason for its downfall—silent and nonviolent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders.

**Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless.** But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13+). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (James 1:15+).

God forbid that we let the silt of sin accumulate in our lives! (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Christian, walk carefully, danger is near!  
On your journey with trembling and fear;  
Snares from without and temptations within  
Seek to entice you once more into sin.  
—Anon.

Little sins add up to big trouble.

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#### Related Resources:

- [The Danger and Deceitfulness of a Hardened Heart](#)
- [Backsliding](#)
- [Are You Entangled?](#)
- [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)
- [Compromise](#)
- [Daniel-Man of Integrity](#)
- [Slow Fade by Casting Crowns](#)
- [Proverbs 4:23 Commentary](#) - Watch over your HEART with all diligence
- [Matthew 5:8 Commentary](#) - Blessed are the pure in HEART
- [Commentary on Romans 8:12-13](#) - on site
- Listen to Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones 4 powerful messages on Romans 8:13 - you will not be disappointed!

[A Call for Action](#) Romans 8:12-13

[The Way of Sanctification](#) Romans 8:12-13

[Sin and the Christian](#) Romans 8:12-13

[Sin and the Body](#) Romans 8:12-13

- [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#) - John Owen
  - [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#) - Greg Herrick
  - [Mortification of Sin](#) - John MacArthur - Pages 3-22
  - [What is mortification of sin / the flesh?;](#)
  - [What does it mean that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak?;](#)
  - [What is the flesh?;](#)
  - [What is the enemy within?;](#)
  - [What is the sin nature?](#)
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## **PURE HEART**

by Craig Smith

Over and over I hear it again  
That the Father desires pure hearts.  
Not to seek earthly treasure or the favor of men,  
But to be found with pureness of heart.

Pure heart is what the Father desires,  
Holy heart, purified by God's holy fire,  
Broken hearts, proven to be faithful and true,  
Fashion in me a heart that's thirsting for You.

Search every chamber, expose them to me  
Create motives of honor and simplicity  
May You find faithfulness, integrity,  
In a heart that is worthy for Your eyes to see.

My only ambition is to stand before You  
And find I was pleasing in Your sight  
An obedient child of God, faithful and true,  
Found with pureness of heart.

## **No Compromise"**

by Keith Green

Consider making it your prayer today.

Make my life a prayer to you  
I wanna do what you want me to  
No empty words and no white lies  
No token prayers, no compromise  
I wanna shine the light you gave  
Through Your Son You sent to save us  
From ourselves and our despair  
It comforts me to know You're really there.  
I wanna thank You now for being patient with me  
Oh, it's so hard to see when my eyes are on me  
I guess I'll have to trust and just believe what You say  
Oh, You're coming again, coming to take me away  
I wanna die and let You give Your life to me  
So I might live and share the hope You gave to me  
The love that set me free  
I wanna tell the world out there,  
You're not some fable or fairy tale  
That I've made up inside my head  
You're God the Son, You've risen from the dead