

## Gradually ...

2 Timothy 4:9-12

### Hearts grow cold gradually

How did the Christians in **Laodicea** become "**lukewarm**" (**Revelation 3:16**)?

- Their fervor for the Lord gradually faded even as a **hot beverage slowly becomes lukewarm**.

How did the Christians in **Ephesus** leave "**their first love**" (**Revelation 2:4-5**)? Did they just "fall" out of love?

- No love ever fails overnight!

### Hearts grow cold gradually

**How is it** that some become lukewarm or leave their first love?

1. **We lose focus** – Colossians 3:1-2, Hebrews 12:1-2; Amos 6:1, Luke 12:19
2. **We don't pay attention** – 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Peter 1:19
3. **We forget** - Titus 2:14, 2 Peter 1:9 (verses 12-15).
4. **We get tired and weary** – Hebrews 12:12-13; Isaiah 40:28-31; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18
5. **We fall victim to the sin and wickedness around us** - Matthew 24:12

**The solution** is to think about Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3), "**sow to the spirit**" (Galatians 6:8-9), and learn to **rely upon God and His strength** (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

### Christians fall away gradually

The sin of drifting – Hebrews 2:1, "... *we must pay much closer attention ... lest we **drift away** from it.*"

- A gradual process in which one **slowly leaves a point of reference** by gliding or flowing by.
- The English word is defined as "**to wander from a set course or point of attention; stray.**"

We fail to pay attention to the current of the "*course of this world*" (Ephesians 2:2).

We fail to take note of our daily choices and decisions like whether to read and study God's word - 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

... Leads to no longer worshipping as we ought. Hebrews 10:24-25

### Weeds gradually choke out the good seed

Jesus referred to the ability of **the cares of this world to slowly overtake** our spiritual life in **Mark 4:7, 18-19**.

God's word warns of being "**entangled**" again in the sin we escape from ... or other things not sinful. (2 Peter 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:4; Hebrews 12:1)

We must continually examine ourselves to make sure that we are not slowly falling in love with "*the world, (or) the things in the world*" (**1 John 2:15**).

What are we worried and bothered about? (Luke 10:41-42)

### Sin, left unchecked, will gradually spread amongst brethren.

Sin has the potential to act as leaven among Christians. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7

The "*spiritual*" need to look for those walking according to the flesh and seek to "*restore*" such a one, looking to ourselves also. Galatians 6:1

Becoming "**hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**" (Hebrews 3:13) is a gradual thing ... hardened because punishment didn't immediately follow (Ecclesiastes 8:11; cf., 2 Peter 3:9, 14-15)

### **False teaching will gradually spread amongst brethren unless silenced.**

Paul warned Timothy to **“avoid”** (or “shun”) the **“talk”** of men who have **“gone astray from the truth”** that will **“spread like gangrene.”** **2 Timothy 2:16-17**

Paul **would not give place** to such false teachers in Galatia **“for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.”** **Galatians 2:5**

Thus false teaching is to be **“exposed”** (**Ephesians 5:11**) and those who propagate such are to be **“silenced”** (**Titus 1:10-11**) with great urgency (Jude 3; Galatians 2:5) and **love.** **Ephesians 4:14**

*“In season and out of season ...”* **2 Timothy 4:2**

### **We attain spiritual maturity gradually.**

**Spiritual growth is a life-long endeavor** that is to happen day by day. A continual “renewal” process (**2 Corinthians 4:16**).

Completeness and maturity take time, but growth is expected. **“For though by this time...”** (**Hebrews 5:12**)

**Life is always a matter of growth or default** (**2 Peter 3:17**)

We are to be ever increasing in spiritual virtues (**2 Peter 1:5-8**).

Growth that continues to **“... a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ”** (**Ephesians 4:13**) ... a process that **takes all of our lives.**

### **We win the “crown of life” by gradually pressing on.**

Paul understood that each day he had to **“press on toward the goal”** (**Philippians 3:14**).

It’s a race that has to be **run with endurance** (cf. **1 Corinthians 9:24-25, Hebrews 12:1-2**)

A lot of daily battles to be fought. **1 Timothy 6:11**

Have we **“done everything”** (**Ephesians 6:13**)?

A lot of daily sacrifices. **Luke 9:23**

### **What isn’t to take place gradually?**

Our obedience to the gospel. **Acts 22:16**, **“And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”**

The need to repent is not to take place gradually but rather is to take place immediately in regards to all that we understand to be a sin and offense before God.

We read of Simon in Acts 8:22-24 who **immediately sought the prayers of his brethren for the sin he had committed.**

Obedience is to exercised **“today.”** **2 Corinthians 6:2**

Are you ready? **Matthew 25:13, 19.**