

# Stuck

Week of January 31

Life is full of pitfalls that get us stuck and unfortunately often keep us stuck. In fact, staying on the move for Christ and His Kingdom is a daily battle. Mature followers of Christ understand that the Christian life is a journey—an obstacle course, of sorts, with ongoing struggle. It is no wonder Jesus said: “Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am” (John 12:26a). Following Jesus, being where *He is*, is the only way to stay unstuck.

The church in Ephesus was instructed to “Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ” (Ephesus 5:2a). And yet later, when Jesus gave a message to John exiled on Patmos, the Lord said to tell believers at Ephesus: “You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you have fallen!” (Revelation 2:4b,5a). How is it that believers so often forget to do the one thing Jesus commanded us to do—to love each other in the same way Christ has loved us (see John 15:12)?

## Read Revelation 2:1-7

The Plain Truth says: “We get unstuck when we move from rule-keeping to compassionate living.” The inference, then, is that we get stuck in the first place when we forget to love and we start keeping rules instead.

1. What does Jesus say about rule-keeping in Matthew 9:10-13 and Matthew 12:7-8 – BONUS QUESTION: what Old Testament Scripture is Jesus quoting?

Now understand, we shouldn’t break covenant with the Lord by betraying His trust. And we shouldn’t let our consciences become seared by willfully living in sin. But love (pure agape love, grace, mercy, forgiveness) covers a multitude of sins and is a more accurate expression of the Father’s deep compassion and patience towards His children. Treasuring God’s commands (His Law) in our hearts and minds is meant to lead us (and others) toward love, not away. Love is always the most excellent way to live (1 Corinthians 12:31b).

2. When has love covered a “multitude of sins” for you (1 Peter 4:8)?

How did God’s grace and unconditional love (perhaps demonstrated through a brother or sister-in-Christ) help you get unstuck?

The Lord commended the church at Ephesus for their hard work, for not tolerating evil people, for using discernment when it came to claims of false prophets, and for patiently enduring suffering (vv2-3). “But I have this complaint against you. You

don’t love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches” (Revelation 2:4-5).

3. Many things can get us to a point where we don’t love the Lord or each other as we “did at first” – name some of them and discuss how we can be on alert.

According to v5a, what will get us unstuck – back in drive – moving forward by loving, serving, and enjoying fellowship with our Lord?

If we refuse to repent or give up, what warning does the Lord give in v5b?

The only way a church can make a difference in the places where the believers live, work, do business, shop, recreate—is for the Spirit of Christ to be among us. The Lord says, “If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches” (v5b). Jesus stands in the middle of the seven lampstands, among the seven churches (Revelation 1:13, 20) and His Presence among us is the only thing that sets us apart and makes us “a Kingdom of priests for God His Father” (Revelation 1:6a). Only by remaining in Christ can we love others and stand in the gap for those around us.

4. One quick way to get stuck is to forget the wonder and pure goodness of our own salvation. Do you remember what it was like when you first met Jesus, when you first fell in love with your Lord and Savior? If so, recount the story and share it. Write out what you remember in the space below.

Outside of your Life Group, with whom do you need to share your story?

Don’t forget to remember! If you have lost your first love, come back to Him and spend some time with your Lord. If you have never accepted Christ into your heart, now would be a great time to invite Him in! Jesus says, “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends” (Revelation 3:20). There is no place on this planet, solar system, universe or beyond where God’s Spirit is absent – only in the hearts of men and women who have never invited Him in. The Lord will not knock down the door of your heart and demand His way. He is a gracious guest waiting to be welcomed.

*Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.  
(Revelation 2:7)*

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Text: Revelation 2:1-7, Ephesians 4:14-32

## The Plain Truth:

We get unstuck when we move from rule

\_\_\_\_\_ to compassionate \_\_\_\_\_.

1) Don't forget to \_\_\_\_\_.

2) Jesus says to " \_\_\_\_\_ ".

3) Jesus says to \_\_\_\_\_ *it*.

### One Year Bible Reading

January 31: Exodus 12:14-13:16, Matthew 20:29-21:22, Psalm 25:16-22, Proverbs 6:12-15

February 1: Exodus 13:17-15:18, Matthew 21:23-46, Psalm 26:1-12, Proverbs 6:16-19

February 2: Exodus 15:19-17:7, Matthew 22:1-33, Psalm 27:1-6, Proverbs 6:20-26

February 3: Exodus 17:8-19:15, Matthew 22:34-23:12, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 6:27-35

February 4: Exodus 19:16-21:21, Matthew 23:13-39, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 7:1-5

February 5: Exodus 21:22-23:13, Matthew 24:1-28, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 7:6-23

February 6: Exodus 23:14-25:40, Matthew 24:29-51, Psalm 30:1-12, Proverbs 7:24-27

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