

Leader Guide

Revive, First love pt 2

Spring 2026 | Week 7

Message Date 5/17/2026

THE GOAL

This week we continue with the series First Love, and we will look at what first love actually looks like once it's alive again — humble, curious, and consuming. David's two attempts at bringing home the Ark of God show us the difference between a familiar heart that assumes it knows enough and a first-love heart that asks God how. Psalm 80 gives us a desperate, beautiful prayer of revival we can pray over our own lives. Our aim is simple: help our group rediscover the joy of being curious about God again, do things His way, and offer their lives back to Him as the kind of worship He has always invited. One of the keys in love being alive is curiosity. One of the best lessons in marriage I have ever received is to be a student of my spouse. Be curious about them. It will help my relationship thrive and the same is true about Jesus.

MY STORY

- 1) If you had to eat one gas station food for every meal for a month, what are you grabbing
- 2) You wake up tomorrow as the world's leading expert on something — but you don't get to pick what. What would be the worst possible thing to be the expert in?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

Read 1 Chronicles 13:3–11 (NLT)

³*It is time to bring back the Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul.*

⁴*The whole assembly agreed to this, for the people could see it was the right thing to do.* ⁵*So David summoned all Israel, from the Shihor Brook of Egypt in the south all the way to the town of Lebo-hamath in the north, to join in bringing the Ark of God from Kiriath-jearim.* ⁶*Then David and all Israel went to Baalah of Judah (also called Kiriath-*

jeirim) to bring back the Ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord who is enthroned between the cherubim. ⁷They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from Abinadab's house. Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the cart. ⁸David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets. ⁹But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the Ark.

¹⁰Then the Lord's anger was aroused against Uzzah, and he struck him dead because he had laid his hand on the Ark. So Uzzah died there in the presence of God.

¹¹David was angry because the Lord's anger had burst out against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means "to burst out against Uzzah"), as it is still called today.

- 4) David and Israel were "celebrating before God with all their might." On the surface, this looks like passionate worship. So, what was actually missing here, and why wasn't enthusiasm enough?

This is one of those passages that catches us off guard, because the celebration in 1 Chronicles 13 looks like what we'd call great worship today — passionate, all-out, lots of music, lots of joy. But God isn't just looking at our enthusiasm; He is also looking at our obedience. The Ark was meant to be carried by Levites on long poles, which had been God's clear instruction back in Exodus. Instead, David and Israel put it on a brand new cart — which is actually how the Philistines had moved it in 1 Samuel 6. The lesson here isn't to be quieter or less expressive in worship; it is that enthusiasm can never replace knowing what God has actually said. God is gentle, but He is also worth taking seriously. The most loving thing we can do for Him isn't to bring our energy alone; it is to bring our energy informed by His Word. Both matter. He loves to be celebrated, and He loves to be obeyed — and the two were always meant to travel together.

- 5) Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark — a small, well-intentioned move — and yet the consequence was severe. What does this teach us about familiarity with sacred things, and why does God take how we approach Him so seriously?

This story is hard, but there is a real kindness in it once you sit with it. Uzzah had grown up around the Ark — his family had kept it in their home for years. Familiarity had quietly trained him to treat the holiest object in Israel like ordinary furniture. When the cart wobbled, his instinct was to steady it as if it were a vase tipping off a shelf. The text doesn't say Uzzah was evil; it just shows us what familiarity can do to us if we aren't careful. Scripture lets us see this not to scare us, but to help us recognize the same drift in our own lives. Have you become casual with prayer? With Scripture? With the Lord's table? With the people of God? Treating sacred things like ordinary things slowly dulls our wonder. The kind invitation here is not to be afraid of God in an unhealthy way, but to recover a holy carefulness — a "wow, this is the living God" posture again. That carefulness is what brings the wonder back.

- 6) The verse says David was "angry because the LORD's anger had burst out against Uzzah." Why is it often easier to be frustrated with God when something goes wrong than to ask whether we were the ones who got something wrong?

Notice this — David didn't pause to ask, "Did we do something wrong?" His first response was anger that God's anger had flared. That is a very human moment, and most of us have lived it. When things go sideways, our first instinct is often frustration rather than reflection. "Why is this happening, God?" is a much easier prayer than, "God, what part of this am I responsible for?" The kindness of this story is that David eventually does ask the deeper question — but it took him three months and a fresh look at Scripture to get there. We don't always have to take three months. The Spirit is gentle and patient, and He is happy to show us, if we will simply ask, "where have I rushed past Your instruction?" Frustration isn't a sin — it is a signal. It is often the first sign that something deeper needs to be examined. Don't be afraid to sit with God and ask, "Is there something here You are inviting me to see?" He always answers that kind of prayer.

1 Chronicles 15:13-15 (NLT)

"Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the LORD our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly. So the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to bring the Ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to Jerusalem. Then the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the LORD had instructed Moses."

- 7) David's confession in verse 13 is striking: "*We failed to ask God how to move it properly.*" How does this admission reflect the heart of a man returning to his first love, and why is this kind of humility so hard for us?

This is one of those rare confessions that has no excuses in it. David doesn't blame Uzzah, doesn't blame the priests, doesn't blame the bumpy road or the stumbling oxen — he simply admits, "*We failed to ask God how to move it properly.*" That is the heart of someone returning to his first love. A first-love heart isn't defensive. It doesn't have to be right. It doesn't have to be impressive. It just wants God, and it is willing to be taught again. The reason humility is hard for us is that it costs our pride — the same pride that made us assume we knew enough in the first place. But here is the beautiful thing: humility is the doorway, not the dead end. The moment David admitted he hadn't asked God how to do this, everything started moving in the right direction. The same is true for you. If there is an area of your life where you have been doing things "your way" for a while, the kindest, fastest way back is the prayer David prayed — "I didn't ask You. Show me how." God loves that prayer.

- 8) The second time, the Levites purified themselves, used the proper carrying poles, and did things just as the LORD had instructed Moses — and it worked. What does this tell us about the importance of doing things God's way rather than our way, even when our intentions are good?

There is a quiet truth tucked into this passage — God cares about the how, not just the heart. We sometimes act as if good intentions are enough, but Scripture gently shows us that obedience matters too. The Levites purified themselves, dressed in white linen, carried the Ark exactly the way God had said to carry it — and what happened? The Ark made it home, and the city celebrated. God isn't trying to make our life harder by giving

us instructions; He is actually trying to make our life flourish. His instructions are always for our good. When we do things God's way — in our marriage, in our parenting, in our work, in our finances, in our worship — we're not earning anything from Him. We are simply lining up with how He designed things to work. That is where the joy and the peace and the lasting fruit come from. Intention is wonderful; obedience is even better. They are meant to go together.

- 9) David's curiosity drove him back to the Scriptures Moses had written. What does it look like for us to "remain curious" about God and His Word — especially in seasons when we feel like we already know what we need to know?

Curiosity is one of the most overlooked traits of a first-love heart. David, the man after God's own heart, made the mistake of assuming he had enough information when he first tried to move the Ark. The second time, he went back to the Scriptures Moses wrote and let God re-teach him things he already "knew." That is stunning. You and I are invited to do the same. The Word of God is endless — every time you come back to a familiar passage, the Holy Spirit can show you something fresh. Don't let familiarity rob you of wonder. If you have read about grace a hundred times, read it again like it is the first. If you have prayed about the same struggle for years, ask God to teach you something new in it this week. Some of the most spiritually alive people I know aren't the ones who know the most — they are the ones who keep asking, keep reading, keep listening, keep showing up curious. That posture is what keeps first love alive.

- 10) Here is a list of things David did in response to his curiosity. How are they different than 1 Chronicles 13?

- Built a special TENT for the Ark.
- The Levites (Priests) were responsible for the Ark's move.
- They purified themselves before moving the ark.
- David and all the Levites wore white linen symbolizing purity.
- It was NOT on a new cart... carried by the Levites on long poles so they would not ever touch it...as it was designed to be carried.
- Sacrifices were offered in great reverence
- Worship and praise were offered before, during and after.

He did none of these things in the first story. He let enthusiasm masquerade as worship.

- 11) Are there things in your relationship with Jesus that you have made assumption about? Are there areas that you need to renew your curiosity about Jesus?

(Justin) One of my biggest takeaways from this whole passage is don't let enthusiasm masquerade as worship. I need to get curious even though I think I may know the answer. I need to ask more questions.

CHAIR TIME TOOLS 

- 1) Pray Psalm 80:17-19 slowly, in your own words, each morning this week. Don't rush it — let the prayer become yours, line by line, until you start to mean every word.
- 2) Pick one passage of Scripture you think you already know well, and quietly ask the Lord, "What have I been assuming about this? Show me something fresh." Then read it slowly and write down what He shows you.
- 3) Think of one person in your life — in your home, your small group, or this church — and ask God how you can turn toward them this week in a fresh way. Then do that one thing, without telling them why.