

~~This Is Not~~ The End

Group Discussion Guide // Week 2

WARM-UP

1. What's your favorite season of the year? Describe a fond memory from that season.
 2. Give a high point from the past week. Give a low point from the past week.
 3. Describe a time when someone corrected you, and even though it was hard, it benefited you in the long run.
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TRUTH

The common theme you see in each letter from Jesus to the seven churches is the call to “conquer.” For disciples, conquering means staying faithful to Jesus, no matter the cost. What Jesus does in the letters is commend the ways in which the churches are staying faithful to him, and confronts the ways they aren't. We can learn what faithfulness looks like for Jesus followers today by seeing what he commends and what he confronts.

Ephesus

Read Revelation 2:1-7

In our culture it seems like we face a choice – will we be a person who cares about truth or a person who cares about people. For Jesus, that's not a choice we have to make. Jesus doesn't say that this church's zeal for the truth led to their loss of love. The Ephesus church should have held to sound doctrine and loved others.

- ▶ Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Why do we “gain nothing” when we lose love as followers of Jesus?
- ▶ Read Ephesians 4:15. What do we learn from this verse about how to hold to sound doctrine and love others?

Pergamum & Thyatira

Read Revelation 2:12-17

Even though these churches weren't ashamed of Jesus' name and did works of love, they didn't confront people among them who accepted unbiblical teaching. This teaching led some people to mix their worship of God with pagan worship. The teaching led others to illicit sex. A follower of

Jesus remains faithful by accepting and obeying what the Bible says. It's also the responsibility of a church to correct unbiblical teaching, even if it offends or goes contrary to the culture.

- ▶ What are some things that are celebrated in American culture that run contrary to faithfully following Jesus? What makes it difficult to change in these areas?

GRACE

Smyrna

Read Revelation 2:8-11

The cost of following Jesus seems far greater for the church in Smyrna than the other cities. Yet they are the only church where Jesus doesn't correct anything. Jesus doesn't promise them better circumstances, but he does promise them the crown of life if they remain faithful. When Jesus tells them to "be faithful unto death," they no doubt thought of the faithfulness of Jesus on their behalf. Even though it cost him his life, he rose to life. So would they.

CHANGE

1. Do you find yourself associating more with the church at Ephesus or the church at Pergamum? How do you need to change your attitude or actions to remain faithful in truth and love?
2. In what ways do you struggle with the cost of following Jesus?
3. How can these letters from Jesus strengthen you to be faithful, no matter the cost?

Pray for wisdom and strength to conquer through faithfulness.