

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #25

Laodicea: Rev. 3:19-20

July 30, 2025

Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

Eph. 1:17-18 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Him: And [I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit] that you may know what is the Hope Of His Calling, and what is the wealth [riches] of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

Eph. 1:19-20 and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe.

Believe = #4100 pisteuó = to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ

These are in accordance with the working of His mighty strength ²⁰ which He produced in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Am I willing to be changed by the Lord? Will I heed His counsel to buy of Him:

1. Gold refined in the fire to prove my faith genuine
2. White garments of justification and sanctification to be properly clothed [Rev. 19:7]
3. The eye salve of the Holy Spirit to have my spiritual eyes opened

If heeded, the counsel of Jesus is the cure to overcome my lukewarmness & apathy.

His counsel is the preparation needed to be an overcomer who overcomes.

Rev. 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent.

Powerful Truth: A lukewarm Christian isn't useful to the Kingdom of God.

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| 1. Lack of Passion and Zeal | 4. Compromise with the World |
| 2. Focus on Self-interest | 5. Half-hearted Commitment |
| 3. Indifference to Spiritual Matters | 6. Lack of Impact |

Essentially, a lukewarm Christian is someone who professes to be a follower of Christ but whose actions and attitudes don't reflect a genuine, wholehearted commitment to Him.

Remember: These letters are written to the church, to believers in Christ.

There could have been unbelievers in their midst,
but unbelievers are not a part of the church.

They needed to be challenged to return to a passionate relationship with God. Jesus loves them and promises to reprove and discipline them to bring them out of their self-sufficiency and into the sufficiency of His life. This could require severe testing, pain and heartache to bring them to a point of personal need and dependency upon the Lord

1. A Word Of Compassion

"as many as I love"

Jesus calls them and continues to love them even when they reject Him and His love.

2. A Word Of Caution "I rebuke and chasten" - He will use two methods to turn us to Him.

a. Rebuke: #1651 Elegchó to convict, or to correct

Describes a Spirit-energized act of bringing wrong into the open so that it can be acknowledged and forsaken. It always carries the aim of restoring people to God's design rather than merely shaming them. It is truth spoken with moral authority, intended to move the conscience toward repentance and obedient faith. Obedience is the fruit of Faith.

Divine Discipline: The verse encourages believers to embrace God's discipline, recognizing it as a Sign of His love and a Catalyst for Spiritual Transformation.

- He will convict us in our hearts via the ministry of the Holy Spirit & His Word.
- God's discipline is never arbitrary; it aims at holiness, repentance, and perseverance.
- If I fail to heed His rebukes, He will use more direct methods.
They were wretched, bearing severe calluses on their soul, hardened against the truth.
- Corrective measures are invitations to renewed fellowship.
- I must maintain personal humility and remain teachable.
- Keep eschatological hope in view; the aim is readiness for Christ's return.

Titus 2:13-14 Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people [of His own possession], zealous of good works.

b. Chasten #3811 paideuó "to correct with blows"

Note: This could require severe testing, pain and heartache to bring them [me or you] to a point of personal need and total dependency upon the Lord.

- He may touch any area of life to get our attention; He might even use death.

Heb. 12:5 My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.

Context: ¹Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Despise = #3643 oligōréō [neglect as a habit] is used only in Heb 12:5 [an OT quote]

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects:

therefore, do not despise the chastening of the Almighty:

For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His Hands make whole.

Prov 3:11 My son, do not keep on neglecting the training of the Lord,

nor go on becoming undone when you are internally convicted by Him.

Berean Standard Bible: My son, do not take lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor lose heart when He rebukes you.

"Take lightly" expresses an attitude that dismisses God's corrective work as insignificant.

- If I see adversity as fatherly training, it robs affliction of its power to intimidate and anchors hope in God's purpose.

Powerful Truth: Divine chastening, rather than producing despair,
is meant to strengthen moral fiber.

The passage positions at the intersection of Divine Sovereignty and Filial Trust.

Filial Trust: a deep-seated belief in God's goodness, guidance, and provision.

The same Father who allows hardship supplies sustaining grace.

Characterized by obedience, a desire to please God, and a willingness to follow His will.

Heb. 12: 6-11 For whom the LORD loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.

⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children.

Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? [NLT]

⁸ But if you are without chastening, Of Which All Have Become Partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed best to them, but He for our PROFIT, That We May Be Partakers Of His Holiness.

- Do not lose heart when He rebukes you.

- Personal holiness flourishes where conviction is welcomed rather than resisted.

¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Warning: Those who Refuse to walk in God's path will encounter trouble in their lives.

Prov. 15:10 Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path;

the one who hates correction will die.

21st Traveler: Laodicea, once prosperous & complacent, is now a miserable waste.

Nothing can exceed the desolation & melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea.

Question: Will I heed Christ's counsel? His commands?

Or will my life become a similar desolation?

Matt. 16:26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? [NKJV]

C.S. Lewis: Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance.

The only thing it cannot be: Moderately Important.

The foundation for a relationship of passion is a heart of purity. Sin kills intimacy.

The greatest obstacle to a vibrant and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is the failure or refusal to repent.

This accounts for our Lord's pointed plea to the Laodiceans: "Be zealous and repent"

3. A Word of Command Be Zealous [zesty = come to a boil] And Repent Of Your Ways.

#2206 zéloó: "to burn with zeal;" to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire - to be earnest, to set one's heart on, to be completely intent upon

"Be zealous" is a present imperative which commands a CONTINUAL STATE. How?

- Use our divine operating assets, the Word, the filling of the Holy Spirit, prayer, etc. Repentance can be defined as "*a change of mind that results in a change of direction.*"
- Confess your past or the present with a view to a change in the future.
- an aorist imperative which means Don't Delay. STOP the discipline BEFORE it begins.

J.I. Packer "Maturity in the faith does not lead to less sorrow over sin, but more. The pain does not diminish; it deepens. It is a law of the spiritual life that the further you go, the more you are aware of the distance still to be covered.

Your growing desire for God makes you increasingly conscious, not so much of where you are in your relationship with Him, but as of yet, where you are not. We must forsake whatever might perpetuate the spiritual sluggishness and unwarranted self-sufficiency."

Call to Zealous Repentance: The verb urges a decisive change from apathetic self-sufficiency to fervent repentance. The remedy for spiritual tepidity is not moderate improvement but blazing zeal born of renewed love for the Lord.

Repent: #3340 metanoëó describes the decisive, Spirit-wrought turning of heart and mind that re-orient a person from sin to God. Throughout the New Testament it is never presented as mere remorse but as a wholehearted response to divine truth that issues in faith, obedience, and fruit worthy of repentance.

John Stott: "Laodicea describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so wide-spread among us today.

Our Christianity is flabby & anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion. We have no problem being PASSIONATE about other things, but not our Christian faith—that would make us stand out a little too much. A luke-warm, passionless believer loses his power to attract people. In fact, they have a REPELLING effect. On the other hand—a Christian—or CHURCH—that is ON FIRE PASSIONATE in the way they follow Christ is incredibly attractive.

Dr. Nathan Barlow - Mossy Foot Project: Excerpt from His Biography

His passion: Build the church of Jesus Christ; train people to be spiritual leaders.

He gave his blood to men of the Murzi tribe to protect them from yellow fever.

Spent most of his life helping people affected by Mossy Foot.

Nathan told the dentist he didn't ever want to leave the mission field for the sake of his teeth again, so he had the dentist pull out all of his teeth & give him false ones.

Peoples' Words: This man cares more about treating our illnesses & telling us about Jesus than he does about his own teeth. Surely, he is worth hearing. I need to know more about this Jesus!

Truth: People are attracted to on-fire believers in the same way we are drawn to a warm fire on a cold night. People are looking for someone or something worth following so they are drawn to passion.

Chuck Swindoll: Have I come to this place in my life: "Lord, I want to be in the center of Your will. I want to do my part without any reservation. I want every area of my life to be committed to You. I'm sick of wading in the shallows. I want to swim in Your plan! I want to jump into the deep end. I am so weary of this half-hearted, hypocritical life. I want to be clean and open before You. Take my eyes and keep them focused straight ahead.

Take my motives and shape them as You please."

Lukewarm, churchy people never pray this. A godly person will say, "Lord, I'm concerned about areas of my life that used to be out on periphery but now keep coming to my attention.

Locked closets. Under-the-rug trash. Hidden secrets. Lord, clean these out."

Ps. 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if *there be any wicked way in me*, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Ps. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right [steadfast] spirit within me.

Eschatological Urgency in Revelation

The risen Christ commands five of the seven churches to repent [Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 19].

Each summons is coupled with the threat of judgment or promise of reward, underscoring repentance as the church's continual posture.

Strong's Greek 3340 traces a scarlet thread from the first cry of the Baptist to the closing warnings of Revelation, establishing repentance as God's gracious summons to enter and remain in fellowship. It is both entrance into life and the daily rhythm of the Christian walk, inseparably joined to faith, producing transformed lives that magnify the mercy and righteousness of God.

Laodicea lost their impact on the world because they were occupied with the world and left the Lord standing outside.

A. Rev. 3:20a A Present Promise "*Behold, I am continually standing at the door, and I am continually knocking on the door...*"

What gracious condescension! The Creator-God-Savior would seek my fellowship.

He stands, knocks and speaks.

Christ is outside *His own church*, desiring to be invited back in! The love of God and His desire to rectify the condition in Laodicea is reflected in the manner in which the God of the universe steadfastly waits outside the Laodicean door.

He has been standing for a period of time and is *still* awaiting their response to his continual knocking. If the Laodicean church was truly *zealous*, they would have already opened the door. The knocking is accompanied by the voice of the bridegroom.

B. 20b A Personal Promise "*if any man hear my voice, and open the door...*" He merely needs just one person to hear him and to open the door. It must be opened by an act of the will. Jesus could have knocked the door down and entered.

He does not have to stand on the outside and wait, but He does.

He waits and knocks because there is something authority and power cannot buy.

A relationship with His child of mutual choosing.

C. 20c A Precious Promise - I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. Among first-century Jews and Greeks, the principal meal was normally taken after sunset. It provided respite from labor and opportunity for extended conversation. Because households gathered around a single table, the act of "taking supper" naturally became a picture of acceptance, intimacy, and fellowship. "To have supper" carries more than culinary meaning; it evokes relationship, order, and honor within the household economy.

Sup= to dine = #1172 deipneó: I will make him to share in my most intimate and blissful contact: This passage is addressed to the church — to believers. This is a call to fellowship with the Savior. It is a call for confession of one's sins with a renewal of mind and heart to continue to draw upon the glorious life of Christ daily through walking by the Spirit and living in the Word. Abide in Christ, the Vine. [John 15:1-7; I John 1:7-10; Eph. 4:20-24; 5:14-18; Rom. 8:1-16].
Note: The verse contains nothing of the gospel message as such—no mention of substitutionary atonement, of Christ's resurrection, of repentance, of faith in the person and work of Christ. Neither is there anything in the adjacent context about these vital matters. It is addressed only to compromising, lukewarm Christians and/or compromising, lukewarm churches. It is they whom Christ is seeking to draw back to Himself.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him [remain in fellowship with Him]; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming.
Powerful Truth: Abide in Me and I in you. You cannot bear fruit UNLESS you abide in Him.

Gayle Rogers Foster: He Is Speaking. You Aren't Listening.
All my life I have thought that there were extended times when God was silent. I have thought that there were times when He didn't choose to communicate or even seem to care. I am realizing now that most of the times I thought that He was silent were actually times when it was me who wasn't listening. I can see now that it wasn't Him who didn't care. It was me who had been so callous that I couldn't feel His touch. It was me who was so self-absorbed that I didn't notice His unwavering love. I realize now that whenever I turn down the noise in my life I can always hear His voice. When I let go of the distractions, I can always see His hand. When I lean in, I can always feel His intimate presence. Yes, there are times when He is speaking in silence. He is not hiding from me. He is constantly pursuing. "Surely Your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life" [Psalm 23:6a NLT]. I was the one running from Him!
Rev. 3:20 was written to you. 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 fellowship together. Time of intimacy. Stop. Look. Listen. He is there. He is speaking. You aren't waiting on Him. He is the one waiting on you.

Jesus Christ is Calling: How will you respond?