

# **Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea**

**Small Group Bible Studies**  
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# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 1

Around 1900 years ago John was being held captive on an island because of his witness as a disciple of Jesus. God sent him visions to tell him about the end of time. He wrote them down and they became the last book of the Bible called Revelation.

In the book of Revelation there are also seven letters written to seven churches that existed on the land that we now called the country of Turkey. The members of these churches were people like our churches today, with some being very strong in their commitment to God and others very weak. God sent messages to them to help them truly receive and keep salvation.

One of these letters was written to the church in Laodicea. This city was a rich city that made fine black wool from sheep, and had a school of medicine. They also manufactured something called Phrygian powder as a medicine for eye problems. The city of Laodicea was on river. Hot water poured out from hot springs upstream near another city Hierapolis, then slowly cooled as they flowed by Laodicea, until the waters were cold when they finally reached the city of Collosi downstream.

This is the setting of eight important verses that we have been told is a special message to the church members living at the end of time. God intends that this message will change the church into an on-fire group of people who love God more than anything else and work with a mighty faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit to give the final witness to the world.

We're going to study this message carefully, asking God to do His deep work in us. We will read the passage many times and then study carefully the phrases and look for other Bible verses that will help us understand the meaning. Most importantly, we will ask God to help us understand and live the message.

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22.
2. Read again Revelation 3:15-17. What is the main problem of this group of people?
3. Jesus says He would rather have His people hot or cold, not lukewarm. What does the life and attitude of someone who is spiritually on-fire or very hot for God look like?
4. What does the life and attitude of someone who is spiritually cold look like?

5. What does the life and attitude of someone who is spiritually lukewarm look like?
6. Read again verse 16. What will happen to the people if they don't change?

This description shows a people who think they are Christian, but have compromised so far that God is about to cast them out. The most serious problem is that the Laodicean church does not even know that they are spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. They think they are doing well, but they are blind to their own need. This is extremely dangerous for how will such a people even ask God for help? We might even be in that state ourselves right now!

7. Revelation 3:18 says that we need to buy eye salve from Jesus so that we can see our problem. Read John 16:7-8, 12-13. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do for us when He came?

The Holy Spirit works in our hearts and minds to help us see Jesus' righteousness in contrast to our own sin. He wakes us up to the seriousness of our situation. This is the eye salve that we need to move away from the blindness of thinking we are doing well, when in reality we are still very far from what God wants us to be.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-12. What else does the Holy Spirit reveal to us?

The Holy Spirit not only shows us our sin, He shows us the beautiful things we can become through God's power.

9. Read Isaiah 57:15. What kind of a person can God especially help?

If we will each humbly ask God to show us our need, He will help us.

10. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- Am I lukewarm or am I really on-fire for God?
- Do I think I am a good Christian or do I really feel my need for God's help?

12. What have you learned that has been most helpful to you from this lesson?

13. What will you do this week that will help you become further on-fire for God?

Together pray this prayer from Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ask for the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth, showing you your need and His gift to you through Jesus.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 2

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we saw how God desires His people to be humble before Him and feel their need of His help. He wants them to be on-fire in their love towards Him and service toward others. How were you helped in this last week by following Jesus' counsel?

In the letter to the Laodicean church, Jesus speaks a very strong message of warning. This week we will look closely at the description of Jesus in this passage in order to understand better who He is and the kind of relationship He invites us to have with Him.

2. Read Revelation 3:14. What does it mean that Jesus is the "Amen, the Faithful and True Witness?"

3. Read Proverbs 27:5-6. In what ways have you found it helpful to have real friends who tell you the truth about yourself rather than just complement you to make you feel good?

Jesus cares enough about us to show us our problems. He counsels and instructs us to help us improve our lives.

4. Read Revelation 3:19 and Hebrews 12:5-11. God chastens the Laodicean church as a loving father chastens his son. How does He want us to respond to His correction?

In our sinful nature we do not like to receive correction. Many people, young and old, do not want to be told what to do. Our Father in Heaven is so much wiser than we are and He patiently works with our stubborn hearts to teach us the importance of listening to Him and obeying Him.

5. What do you think would help us to more readily receive correction from God and others?

6. Read Proverbs 3:1-8. What promises does God give to us if we will listen to His counsel, trust, and obey Him?

7. Read Revelation 3:20. What kind of relationship is Jesus describing here?

In many cultures, eating together shows a special friendship. God is not only our Father and Lord, He is also our close friend.

8. Read John 15:15-16, 4-5. What do these verses tell you about the kind of relationship Jesus wants to have with you?

9. What types of Bible study, prayer or worship help you to have a close relationship with Jesus?

10. In what ways have you found your relationship with God grow weaker through busyness, wrong friendships, discouragement, or entertainment like movies, video games, and the Internet?

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- Is my relationship with God an obedient and intimate relationship?
- What is blocking me from being closer to God?

13. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

14. What will you do this week to bring these truths into your daily life?

Pray, confessing the things that have kept you from receiving God's correction or have blocked you from having a close relationship with Him. Ask God to give you a new heart that will love Him and serve Him always.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 3

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied about how God wants to relate to us as Father, Lord, and close Friend. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

2. Read verse 18 again. In this lesson we're going to begin to study the meaning of "gold refined in the fire." There is much to learn and so this study will take us several weeks.

3. Read 1 Peter 1:6-9. To what spiritual quality does this text compare gold refined in the fire?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:2. What must faith have with it in order for faith to be truly valuable?

5. Read Galatians 5:6. How can you tell if a person has real faith?

Faith that works through love is the combination that is like costly gold. Nothing matters more to God. Let's begin to examine more carefully what these qualities are like and ask ourselves if we truly have them. In this lesson let's examine love towards God.

6. Read Matthew 22:34-38. What is the greatest commandment?

7. Think about these three different parts of the commandment. Our lives consist of feelings, thoughts, and actions. How could you tell if someone loved God with all of his heart, his soul, and his mind?

8. Read Exodus 20:1-11. In what ways do the first four commandments tell us to love God?

9. Besides statues of gold or silver, what other things do people worship or love more than God?

10. Read Matthew 10:37-39. What does this passage teach you about loving God?

People show their love to God by how they spend their time. They will read the Bible and pray frequently. They will often praise Him through singing or by telling others what He has done for them. Others are more distracted by their work, their studies, their friends, the news, movies, games, and the internet. We each must examine our lives to see if we really love God first and most.

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- Do I really love God with all my heart, soul, and mind?
- Do I have any idols? What things do I sometimes put first before God in my thoughts and actions?

12. Read Romans 5:5. Where can we get the precious gold of love for God that we have been studying about?

13. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

14. What will you do this week to be more on-fire for God and to truly have “gold refined in the fire?”

Pray asking the Holy Spirit to convict each of you where you have any idols, any thing that is keeping you from loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Ask God to give you a heart of true repentance to turn from loving those things more than God. Thank Him for forgiveness and a new heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit and love.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 4

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied about the precious God of faith that works through love. We talked about loving God more than anything else, putting Him first in our time, our actions, and our thoughts. How were you helped in this last week by the counsel of Jesus to love Him more than anything else?

This week we are going to continue to study about the “gold refined in the fire.” We will study what true love is like. We are told that we think we have riches, that we think we are loving, but that we actually have very little love.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

3. Read again verses 4-8. Choose one of the qualities of love that you especially appreciate and tell why you think it is important.

God wants us to experience this love and to give it to others. He intends that the family be the place where we do this. However, many families do not have this kind of love. Even Christian homes often need more of it. Let’s explore what this passage in 1 Corinthians 13 should look like in the home.

4. Describe the difference between a father that is patient and kind and a father that easily gets frustrated and angry.

5. Describe the difference between brothers and sisters who are envious and boasting compared to those who are humble and happy for each other.

6. Describe the difference between a rude and selfish mother and a mother who does not behave rudely and does not seek her own.

7. Describe the difference between a couple who gives up on their marriage and divorces and a couple who “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

8. Read Ephesians 5:25-28. Describe what a husband will do and say if he loves his wife as God asks him to.

9. Read Ephesians 5:22-24. Describe what a wife will do and say if she loves her husband as God asks her to.

10. Read Ephesians 6:1-2. Describe what a son or daughter will do and say if he or she loves the parents as God says to.

11. Read Ephesians 6:4. Describe what a parent will do and say if he loves his children as God says to.

12. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- Which qualities of love am I especially lacking?
- Who in my family do I especially have a difficult time loving?

13. Read Ephesians 3:14-21. What does God promise to do for you so that you can love your family and others like Jesus loves you?

14. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

15. What will you do this week to live out this lesson in greater love to your family and others?

Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to convict each of you about where you are not being loving in the way Jesus loves you. Have them think of specific people in their family and elsewhere. Ask God to give you each a heart of true repentance to turn from the natural ways of impatience and selfishness. Receive again the forgiveness and new heart that God promises, including His very presence that has all the love we could ever need.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 5

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how the precious gold of faith working by love looks in the family. How were you helped in this last week by the counsel of Jesus?

This week we are going to continue to study about the “gold refined in the fire.” We will study what true love does when it encounters people with problems. Whenever we are around people, eventually we have problems. This happens in the family, in the neighborhood, at work, and at school. We have to learn to work through those problems with love.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. How would our communities and churches be different from the way they are now if everyone loved each other like this?

Jesus knew we would face many problems in our relationships and He gave excellent counsel in Matthew chapter 18. Let’s explore His plan to help us truly love one another.

3. Read Matthew 18:1-5. What question did the disciples ask Jesus?

Many people want to be important and have other people recognize that they are special. This quality often leads them to put other people down and to speak about and show off their own good qualities. This leads to hurt feelings and separation between people. Jesus wants to change that and bring in true love among us.

3. Jesus said we must become like little children. What good qualities of children was Jesus speaking about?

Children are humble, they know there are many things they can’t do. They are quick to ask for help. They also are quick to forgive after someone says they are sorry. Therefore one of the first things that a person with true love does when he has a problem with someone, is to be humble and pray to see what part of the problem is his fault.

4. Read Matthew 18:6-9. What can happen to young people and new Christians when they see those who are more mature fall into sin?

5. What does Jesus mean when He says we should cut off our hand if it causes us to sin?

We see here very clearly how seriously Jesus looks at sin. The second thing a person with true love does to solve his problems with people is to determinedly get rid of any of his sins that might make someone else stumble.

6. Read Matthew 18:10-14. According to the parable about the lost sheep, how does God feel about those who are lost, who have fallen away from Him and are struggling to come back?

7. With Jesus' love in our hearts, how will we think and act towards people who are lost or struggling?

8. Read Matthew 18:15-20. What are the steps that Jesus said we should take when we see someone who has fallen into sin?

9. How did Jesus treat the heathen and tax collectors?

The third thing a person with true love does when he has a problem with someone, is to seek them out repeatedly to try to help them return to God. He continues to care for them and try to help them even when they don't respond.

10. Read Matthew 18:21-35. What is the main lesson from this story?

The fourth thing a person with true love does when he has a problem with someone is to forgive him as Jesus has forgiven us. It can feel very difficult to forgive someone who has hurt you. Many times the pain is so great that it feels impossible. However, God says it is so important that if we keep anger and bitterness in our hearts, He won't be able to forgive us. We must find a way to have Jesus' love. Otherwise we truly are the poor and naked of the Laodicean church.

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions about the four areas of problem solving we've look at:

- Am I humble, willing to look for my fault in the problem?
- Is there sin that I need to get rid of that is causing someone else to stumble?

- Do I love those who have fallen like Jesus loves them and am I determinedly trying to help them come back to Him?
- Is there anyone I haven't forgiven?

12. Read Colossians 3:10, 12-14. What has God promised us in order to be able to love each other even when we have problems?

13. What have you learned from this lesson that has been especially helpful to you?

14. What will you do this week to act on to solve any problems you are having with others?

Pray humbly, confessing any differences you have with each other, seeking for God's forgiveness and ability to forgive one another.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 6

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how the precious gold of faith working through love helps us work through our relationship problems. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

Think week we want to study more about faith. The Bible speaks of faith as one of the most important things we should have.

2. Read Hebrews 11:6. What does faith believe?

True faith in God not only believes that He exists, but that He loves us enough to help us when we seek after Him with all our hearts.

3. Read Matthew 7:7-11. What does true faith believe about the Heavenly Father's willingness to give good gifts to us?

4. Do you really believe that whatever you ask for, God will give it to you?

5. Read Matthew 8:5-13. Jesus was very impressed by this man's faith. What was special about the way he believed?

This man had learned that whatever Jesus said would happen. Just one command from Jesus' mouth was all he needed. True faith believes whatever God has promised in His word. The Bible is full of promises. Even God's commands are like promises because He has the power to make them happen in our lives if we have faith in Him.

6. Read the following promises God has made to you.

- John 3:16
- Philippians 4:19
- James 1:5
- Matthew 5:44
- Isaiah 26:3
- Jude 24

7. If you consistently believed the promises above how would your lives be different?

8. Read Romans 10:17. How can you increase your faith?

The more you read God's word and see His love for you and what He has promised you, the more you will trust Him and see answers to your prayers.

9. Read Matthew 17:14-20. Why couldn't the disciples cast out the evil spirit?

10. What kind of mountains do you think God can move if we have faith in Him?

There are problems all around us. Some are sick. Others have problems with evil spirits. Many have financial problems or family problems. Others are trying to get rid of bad habits. All of these are like mountains in their lives. Faith in God's power and love can remove them.

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- In what areas of my life do I often doubt God's promises?
- Do I have faith that God can use me to pray for miracles of healing and deliverance in other people's lives?

12. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

13. What will you do this week to increase your faith and see God's greater answers to your prayers?

Pray for God's forgiveness for being poor in this precious gold of faith that works by love. Ask God to increase your faith by helping each of you to spend more time in God's word, reading His promises and commands. Ask now for whatever you believe God truly promises you.

# **Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea**

## **Lesson 7**

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how God delights to see us use the precious gold of faith to claim His promises and ask great things from Him. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

Think week we want to study more about faith. The Bible speaks of faith as more precious than gold tried in fire.

2. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. What does God use to refine our faith like gold is refined in fire?

3. In what ways can people's faith become stronger when they have trials?

4. When was a time you had serious trials in your life? Did you become stronger or weaker through them? What did you learn?

5. Read Job 1:6-22. How did Job respond to the trials in his life?

6. Read Job 13:15. What kind of trust in God did Job have?

7. Read Job 42:2, 5-6, 10. What else did Job learn through his trials?

Satan wants to destroy us. He seeks to do everything he can to discourage us and get us to stop trusting God.

8. Read Ephesians 6:16. What is the most important weapon that we have in fighting against Satan and his temptations?

Since faith is our greatest weapon against Satan's attacks, we need to know what we can do in order to increase our ability to trust God no matter what happens to us.

9. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. What should we do when we are tempted to be discouraged and give up our faith during difficult times?

10. Read Hebrews 12:12-15. What can we do to help someone else when we see they are discouraged?

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- When my prayers seem unanswered or I encounter trials do I typically get discouraged, upset, or do I rejoice, trusting God?
- Am I often speaking faith and encouragement to others or am I frequently complaining and criticizing?

12. Let's read 1 Peter 1:6-7 one more time. Besides benefiting us, what good thing happens for God's kingdom when we actually rejoice in trials, trusting God?

13. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

14. What will you do this week to increase your faith and perseverance along with your encouragement to others?

Pray, confessing to God your lack of faith and quickness to discouragement and complaining. Ask for His forgiveness and for a new heart that rejoices in trials, trusting God no matter what. Pray for a determination to speak and think faith no regardless of what happens in this next week.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 8

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how God delights to see us use the precious gold of faith to trust Him no matter what trials we are going through. We can even rejoice because we are becoming stronger and God is getting glory as the One who is worthy of our trust and praise. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

According to Jesus' description of the Laodicean church, the people were naked while thinking they had clothes on. Let's look carefully to see what the white garment means and how we need it too.

2. Read Revelation 19:8. What do clean garments mean in this text?

3. Isaiah 64:6. How does the Bible describe the good deeds that people try to do?

4. Read Revelation 7:13-14. What does it mean to make your garments white in the blood of the lamb?

5. Describe how you felt when you learned for the first time that God could forgive your sins.

6. Read Zechariah 3:1-5. This is a description of how God works with us to bring His righteousness in place of our sins. What is especially meaningful to you about this passage?

7. The Ten Commandments is one of the best places to understand what true righteousness is. Read Exodus 20:12-17. Then read Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 20. From these passages what would you say is true righteousness?

8. Read Romans 3:21-26. How does God make us righteous?

9. Read Titus 3:4-7. What else can you learn from this passage about how God makes us righteous?

10. Read 1 John 1:9. How can we have our sins forgiven and our hearts cleansed?

The robe of Jesus' righteousness covers our past sins as we confess them and turn from them. God also cleanses our hearts and through the Holy Spirit living in us, brings the righteousness of Jesus into our lives.

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- What areas of your life do you feel the least righteous, the most unlike Christ?
- Is there anything that you need to especially confess and turn from in order to be confident that you are forgiven and have received Christ's righteousness?

13. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

14. What will you do this week to bring these truths into your daily life?

Pray, confessing your need of forgiveness and cleansing. Thank God for His mercy towards you in Jesus' death on the cross. Pray that you will be able to live His righteousness in a way that others can see and receive God's salvation too.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 9

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how God has given us a perfect white garment through Jesus' death on the cross. He freely forgives us and cleanses us as we turn to Him through confession and repentance. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

We have studied a lot about the great remedies Jesus offers to get us out of a lukewarm, dangerous condition into an on-fire love for God and a life full of faith. This time we will look at a very important word that is the only way we can get the gold, the white garments and the eye salve. It is the word, "buy."

2. Read Revelation 3:18. How can a person who is so poor that they don't have clothes be able to buy things as precious as gold, beautiful garments, and medicine?

3. Read Isaiah 55:1-2, 6-7. God's gift of salvation is free—we buy it without money. However, what does God require of sinners before He will have mercy on them?

As sinners the only thing we really have to give God is our sin and our lives. In a real sense the only thing a naked, poor person can do to buy anything is to sell himself. This is just what God wants. He doesn't need food or money, but He has created us to be in loving relationships with Him. We can have this only if we sell ourselves—that is turn from being friends with His enemies—sin, Satan, and everything evil.

4. Read Luke 14:25-33. What does Jesus ask us to give up in order to be His disciples?

5. Why is it important to love Jesus more than family, friends, pleasures, possessions, and even life itself?

6. Read Matthew 13:44-46. What lesson do you think Jesus wanted to teach in these parables about the rewards of surrendering everything to follow Him?

7. Tell about a time when you were blessed for surrendering something to God even when it was difficult?

8. Our purpose in surrendering everything to God is not to empty our lives but to fill it with His love and great purposes. Read Isaiah 58:6-7. How does God want us to use our lives, including our time and talents?

9. It can seem impossible to be totally surrendered to God. Read Galatians 6:14-15. What has Jesus' death made possible for us?

Jesus took our sins upon Him and they died with Him. In exchange He makes us a new person and the Holy Spirit brings Jesus' righteousness inside us. This makes it possible for us to completely surrender to God.

10. Read Galatians 2:20. How is it possible day by day and moment by moment for us to die to our selfishness and live for God?

We must choose to believe we have power to turn from selfishness and live totally for God moment by moment through faith in God's promises and Jesus' death.

11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- Is there something God has been convicting me that I should surrender to Him but haven't given up yet? (For example, think about what you eat and drink, what you focus your thoughts on or speak about, the kind of entertainment you watch, listen to or do, and the people you have chosen as close friends).
- Is there something God is wanting me to do to help others that I am not doing?
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12. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?

13. What will you do this week to bring these truths into your daily life?

Pray, confessing the error of thinking that anything in this world could be better than love for God and the joy of serving with Him to help others. Ask God for forgiveness for not surrendering more quickly in the past. Pray for a new heart that is empty of selfishness and full of the Spirit of Christ's self-sacrifice. Pray for each other to completely belong to God more and more.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 10

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how God has called us to give up everything we have and are in order to receive all of His priceless treasures. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

We have learned so much in our study of the Laodicean message. Surely now through the Holy Spirit's help we can see more clearly the beauty of Christ's righteousness and the wonderful nature of true love and incredible faith. However, there are many people who get discouraged when they see the high standard God has called them to live. This week we want to study carefully the last verse which speaks about the necessity and possibility of overcoming as Jesus did. Read one more time Revelation 3:22.

2. Read Hebrews 2:17-18 and Hebrews 4:14-16. Why did Jesus take a body like ours and endure temptation like we have to?

When we are struggling to overcome sin and become more like Jesus, it is extremely important to know if it is actually possible to overcome and have complete victory. Knowing that Jesus took a body like ours and overcame by trusting God's power can encourage us a lot in our fight with temptation. Otherwise it's easy to think we can never be like Him.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What does God promise you?

Believing God's promise we must faithfully watch for God's way of escape. We must start by searching for God's plan for victory throughout the Bible.

4. Read Matthew 4:1-11. What did Jesus do to overcome Satan in all three of the temptations?

5. Read Psalm 119:11. How can you follow the same method in order to have victory?

6. Read James 4:6-10. What can you gain from these verses that will help you overcome sin? Find and discuss as many as you can.

7. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. How does the fact that you are fighting against evil spirits make you feel?
8. What armor has God given you and how effective is it?
9. How will faith and God's word together empower you to fight away temptation?
10. Share an experience in which God helped you overcome a temptation or sin.
11. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:
  - What temptation am I consistently failing to overcome?
  - What must I do now to gain the victory over it?
12. What has been most helpful to you in this lesson?
13. What will you do this week to bring these truths into your daily life?

Pray, confessing the weaknesses that we all have and the failure to believe that victory is possible through God. Ask God for forgiveness and a new heart that is watchful regarding temptation and eagerly seeking for His power. Pray for each other to have victory this week and courage to pray for forgiveness and try again when you fail.

# Love and Liberation for Lukewarm Laodicea

## Lesson 11

1. Read Revelation 3:14-22. Last week we studied how to overcome temptation through God's power. How were you helped in this last week by Jesus' counsel?

We have now read this passage at least eleven times. We've studied a piece of it ten different times. Hopefully we understand God's special last day message for us much better than at the beginning. This week we want to review it one more time to make sure we are gathering all the benefit we possibly can at this time in our lives.

2. What has been most helpful to you during the last ten weeks of this study?

3. How would you describe true love? You can use any text or talk about love in relation to the home, workplace, neighborhood, or school.

4. What is real faith like? Again feel free to use Bible texts or experiences to remind us of what we've learned.

5. How has the Holy Spirit helped you to see yourself more clearly and grow?

6. Do you still feel that you are lukewarm or do you think you have grown a lot hotter in your love for God and service to others?

7. How have you been able to help others with their relationship with God?

8. What victories has God given you recently?

9. Take a few minutes quietly by yourself asking the following questions:

- What area of the message to Laodicea do I still really need to grow in?
- Who could I invite to join me in going through these lessons or other lessons to help them in a small group?

10. What will you do this week to bring these truths further into your daily life?

Pray, rejoicing in God for all He's taught you and asking Him to lead you forward further and further in devotion to Him.

## **Some Ellen White Quotes Regarding the Laodicean Message**

### **Jesus**

“The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly merchantman, laden with riches, calling from house to house, presenting His priceless goods” (7BC 965).

### **Laodicea**

“The message to the church of the Laodiceans applies especially to the people of God today. It is a message to professing Christians who have become so much like the world that no difference can be seen” (7BC 959).

“The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to our condition. How plainly is pictured the position of those who think they have all the truth, who take pride in their knowledge of the Word of God, while its sanctifying power has not been felt in their lives. The fervor of the love of God is wanting in their hearts, but it is this very fervor of love that makes God's people the light of the world....

Here is represented a people who pride themselves in their possession of spiritual knowledge and advantages. But they have not responded to the unmerited blessings that God has bestowed upon them. They have been full of rebellion, ingratitude, and forgetfulness of God; and still He has dealt with them as a loving, forgiving father deals with an ungrateful, wayward son. They have resisted His grace, abused His privileges, slighted His opportunities, and have been satisfied to sink down in contentment, in lamentable ingratitude, hollow formalism, and hypocritical insincerity.” (1SM 357).

“But the counsel of the true Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm as in a hopeless case. There is yet a chance to remedy their state, and the Laodicean message is full of encouragement; for the backslidden church may yet buy the gold of faith and love, may yet have the white robe of the righteousness of Christ, that the shame of their nakedness need not appear. Purity of heart, purity of motive, may yet characterize those who are halfhearted and who are striving to serve God and mammon. They may yet wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

There is hope for our churches if they will heed the message given to the Laodiceans” (7BC 966).

### **Lukewarm**

“It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to unbelievers, and evil angels exult over them, and taunt the angels of God with their crooked course. Such are a curse to the cause at home or abroad. They draw nigh to God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him” (1T 188).

## **Blindness**

"The Laodicean message must be proclaimed with power; for now it is especially applicable. Now, more than ever before, are seen pride, worldly ambition, self-exaltation, double-dealing, hypocrisy, and deception. Many are speaking great swelling words of vanity, saying, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' Yet they are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (7BC 962).

## **Poverty**

"The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people.,,,  
You may manifest great zeal in missionary effort, and yet because it is corrupted with selfishness, and tastes strongly of self, it is nought in the sight of God; for it is a tainted, corrupted offering. Unless the door of the heart is open to Jesus, unless He occupies the soul temple, unless the heart is imbued with His divine attributes, human actions when weighed in the heavenly balances, will be pronounced 'Wanting.' The love of Christ would make you rich; but many do not realize the value of His love. Many do not realize that the spirit which they cherish is destitute of the meekness and lowliness of Christ, destitute of the love that would constitute them channels of light" (7BC 961).

## **Summary of Merchandise**

"Jesus is going from door to door, standing in front of every soul temple, proclaiming, 'I stand at the door, and knock.' As a heavenly merchantman, He opens His treasures and cries, '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.' The gold that He offers is without alloy, more precious than that of Ophir; for it is faith and love.

The white raiment He invites the soul to wear is His own robe of righteousness; and the oil for anointing is the oil of His grace, which will give spiritual eyesight to the soul in blindness and darkness, that he may distinguish between the workings of the Spirit of God and the spirit of the enemy. 'Open your doors,' says the great Merchantman, the possessor of spiritual riches, 'and transact your business with Me. It is I, your Redeemer, who counsels you to buy of Me'" (7BC 965).

## **Eyesalve**

"The Lord knocks at the door of your heart, desiring to enter, that He may impart spiritual riches to your soul. He would anoint the blind eyes, that they may discover the holy character of God in His law, and understand the love of Christ, which is indeed gold tried in the fire" (7BC 965).

## **White Raiment**

The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ that may be wrought into the character. Purity of heart, purity of motive, will characterize every one who is washing his robe, and making it white in the blood of the Lamb" (7BC 965).

### **Repent and Let Jesus In**

“Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, will have contrition of soul, will repent for their resistance of the Spirit of the Lord. They will confess their sin in refusing the light that heaven has so graciously sent them, and they will forsake the sin that grieved and insulted the Spirit of the Lord. They will humble self, and accept the power and grace of Christ, acknowledging the messages of warning, reproof, and encouragement. Then their faith in the work of God will be made manifest, and they will rely upon the atoning sacrifice. They will make a personal appropriation of Christ's abundant grace and righteousness, and He will become to them a present Saviour; for they will realize their need of Him, and with complete trust will rest in Him. They will drink of the water of life from the divine, inexhaustible Fountain. In a new and blessed experience, they will cast themselves upon Christ, and become partakers of the divine nature” (You Shall Receive Power 294).

My brethren, be whole-hearted Christians, or else make no profession of Christianity. To many the words are spoken, ‘I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.’ Their conduct is not in harmony with God’s holy law. They present before the world a life of selfishness, corrupted by sin. They do not love Christ; if they did, they would love their brethren....

Return to your first experience, when your soul was filled with love for Christ. Gather to your heart the obedience of a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Obedience to the law of the Lord makes men pure, holy, undefiled....

O that there might be seen among our people a deep and thorough work of repentance and reformation! O that they would fall on the Rock, and be broken! Let us crucify self, that in our hearts may grow up a strong love for Christ and for one another. Let us bring into the daily experience the instruction contained in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Self must be surrendered to God before there can take possession of the life that strong, steady belief in the truth that is broad and comprehensive; that casts out from the heart all enmity, all petty differences, and transforms coldness into Christlike affection.

Why should not believers love one another? It is impossible to love Christ, and at the same time act discourteously toward one another. It is impossible to have the Christ-love in the heart, and at the same time draw apart from one another, showing no love or sympathy. The deeper our love for Christ, the deeper will be our love for one another” (RH, February 24, 1903).

### **Overcome**

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation” (1T 187).

## **Use of the Message**

“The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world” (7BC 964).

“This fearful message will do its work. When it was first presented, it led to close examination of heart. Sins were confessed, and the people of God were stirred everywhere. Nearly all believed that this message would end in the loud cry of the third angel. But as they failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time, many lost the effect of the message. I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel. As this message affected the heart, it led to deep humility before God. Angels were sent in every direction to prepare unbelieving hearts for the truth. The cause of God began to rise, and His people were acquainted with their position. If the counsel of the True Witness had been fully heeded, God would have wrought for His people in greater power. Yet the efforts made since the message has been given, have been blessed of God, and many souls have been brought from error and darkness to rejoice in the truth.

God will prove His people. Jesus bears patiently with them, and does not spew them out of His mouth in a moment. Said the angel: ‘God is weighing His people.’ If the message had been of as short duration as many of us supposed, there would have been no time for them to develop character. Many moved from feeling, not from principle and faith, and this solemn, fearful message stirred them. It wrought upon their feelings, and excited their fears, but did not accomplish the work which God designed that it should. God reads the heart. Lest His people should be deceived in regard to themselves, He gives them time for the excitement to wear off, and then proves them to see if they will obey the counsel of the True Witness” (1T 186).

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people” (EW 270).

“The design of the message to the Laodiceans was to rid the church of . . . fanatical influences; but the effort of Satan has been to corrupt the message, and destroy its influence. He would be better pleased to have fanatical persons embrace the testimony, and use it in his cause, than to have them remain in a lukewarm state. I have seen that it was not the design of the message to lead brother to sit in judgment over his brother, to tell him what to do, and just how far to go, but for each individual to search his own heart, and attend to his own individual work” (7BC 962).

“One day at noon I was writing of the work that might have been done at the last General Conference if the men in positions of trust had followed the will and way of God. Those who have had great light have not walked in the light. The meeting was closed, and the break was not made. Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done, and the Holy Spirit was not imparted.

I had written thus far when I lost consciousness, and I seemed to be witnessing a scene in Battle Creek.

We were assembled in the auditorium of the Tabernacle. Prayer was offered, a hymn was sung, and prayer was again offered. Most earnest supplication was made to God. The meeting was marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The work went deep, and some present were weeping aloud.

One arose from his bowed position and said that in the past he had not been in union with certain ones and had felt no love for them, but that now he saw himself as he was. With great solemnity he repeated the message to the Laodicean church: “‘Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’ In my self-sufficiency this is just the way I felt,” he said. “‘And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ I now see that this is my condition. My eyes are opened. My spirit has been hard and unjust. I thought myself righteous, but my heart is broken, and I see my need of the precious counsel of the One who has searched me through and through. Oh, how gracious and compassionate and loving are the words, ‘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 eyesalve, that thou mayest see.’” Revelation 3:17, 18.

The speaker turned to those who had been praying, and said: “We have something to do. We must confess our sins, and humble our hearts before God.” He made heartbroken confessions and then stepped up to several of the brethren, one after another, and extended his hand, asking forgiveness. Those to whom he spoke sprang to their feet, making confession and asking forgiveness, and they fell upon one another's necks, weeping. The spirit of confession spread through the entire congregation. It was a Pentecostal season. God's praises were sung, and far into the night, until nearly morning, the work was carried on.

The following words were often repeated, with clear distinctness: ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.’ Verses 19, 20.

No one seemed to be too proud to make heartfelt confession, and those who led in this work were the ones who had influence, but had not before had courage to confess their sins.

There was rejoicing such as never before had been heard in the Tabernacle.

Then I awoke from my unconsciousness, and for a while could not think where I was. My pen was still in my hand. The words were spoken to me: “This might have been. All this the Lord was waiting to do for His people. All heaven was waiting to be gracious.” I thought of where we might have been had thorough work been done at

the last General Conference, and agony of disappointment came over me as I realized that what I had witnessed was not a reality.

God's way is always the right and the prudent way. He always brings honor to His name. Man's only security against rash, ambitious movements is to keep the heart in harmony with Christ Jesus. Man's wisdom is untrustworthy. Man is fickle, filled with self-esteem, pride, and selfishness. Let the workers doing God's service trust wholly in the Lord. Then the leaders will reveal that they are willing to be led, not by human wisdom, which is as useless to lean upon as is a broken reed, but by the wisdom of the Lord, who has said: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.' James 1:5, 6" (8T 104-106, written in 1903).