

Small Group Leaders' Guide

Revelation 3:14-22 | When Christ Is Outside the Church

Theme: Jesus calls a lukewarm church to repent, receive what only He can give, and return to fellowship with Him.

Big Idea

Jesus lovingly confronts spiritual self-sufficiency and invites us into wholehearted dependence and fellowship with Him.



Warm Up

Opening Question

Have you ever thought you were doing “fine” spiritually, but later realized you were drifting? What helped you recognize it?

Follow-up Question

Why is it easy to become comfortable or self-sufficient?

Leader Tips

- Keep this section relational, not overly heavy at first
- Encourage honesty without forcing people to confess deeply right away.
- Explain that Laodicea was a wealthy city, known for banking, black wool, and medical eye salve. Jesus uses those local realities to expose their spiritual condition.



Know It

Read Revelation 3:14–22

Discussion Questions

1. What problem does Jesus identify in the church of Laodicea?
2. What does it mean that they were “lukewarm”?
3. In verse 17, what did the Laodiceans think about themselves?
 - a. What did Jesus say was actually true about them?
4. According to verse 19, why does Jesus rebuke and discipline them?

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Leader Tips

- Amen - comes from the Hebrew word 'āmēn, meaning “truly,” “certainly,” or “so be it.” Jesus is the final truth and trustworthy confirmation of God’s promises.
- Faithful in Greek is pistos, meaning reliable, trustworthy, or loyal.
- True is alēthinos, meaning genuine or real, not fake or merely outward.
- Beginning or “origin” is Greek archē, which can mean beginning, source, ruler, or authority. Jesus is not created; He is the sovereign source and ruler over creation.
- Lukewarm is Greek chliaros, meaning tepid or warm. Laodicea likely received water through aqueducts, and by the time it arrived, it was lukewarm and unpleasant.
- Repent is Greek metanoeō, meaning to change one’s mind, turn around, and reorient one’s life toward God.
- Rebuke is Greek elenchō, meaning to expose, correct, or bring conviction.
- Discipline is Greek paideuō, meaning to train or instruct like a loving parent.
 - Emphasize: Jesus’ correction is not rejection. Verse 19 says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline.”



Share It

Discussion Questions

1. The Laodiceans said, “I am rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing.” Where do people today tend to feel self-sufficient?
2. Why is spiritual pride so dangerous?
3. What might “lukewarm faith” look like in everyday life?
4. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and having fellowship with Jesus?

Leader Tips

- Be careful with Revelation 3:20. It is often used evangelistically, and that application can be helpful, but in context Jesus is speaking to a church. The picture is of Jesus calling His people back into fellowship.
- Love - in verse 19 is Greek **phileō**, referring to affection, personal love, and relational care.
- Zealous is Greek zēleuō, meaning to be deeply committed, eager, or earnest.
- Jesus is not calling them to shame-driven religion but to renewed passion and dependence.
- If the conversation gets too abstract, ask: “What would this look like on a normal Monday?”

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Live

Personal Reflection

Ask the group to quietly consider:

- Where have I become spiritually comfortable?
- Where am I relying on my own resources instead of Christ?
- Is there any area where Jesus is knocking, but I have been slow to open?
- What would repentance look like for me this week?

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus tells them to buy refined gold, white clothes, and eye salve from Him. What do you think each represents?
2. What is one area of your life where you need Jesus to restore spiritual clarity?
3. How can we as a group help each other avoid lukewarm faith?
4. What is one practical step you can take this week to respond to Jesus' correction?

Possible Applications

Choose one:

- Spend time in prayer each morning asking Jesus to reveal spiritual blind spots.
- Confess one area of self-sufficiency to God and a trusted believer.
- Recommit to consistent time in Scripture.
- Serve someone in a way that costs you comfort.
- Make space for silence and repentance before God.

Leader Tips

- Buy is Greek *agorazō*, meaning to purchase. The irony is that Jesus tells a wealthy church to “buy” what they cannot truly afford on their own. They must receive from Him.
- Refined by fire points to purified faith and true spiritual riches.
- White clothes symbolize righteousness, purity, and being covered by Christ.
- Eye salve connects to Laodicea's medical reputation, but Jesus says they need spiritual sight.
- Conquers is Greek *nikaō*, meaning to overcome or prevail. In Revelation, conquering is connected to faithful endurance in Christ.
- Encourage specific application, not vague statements like “I need to do better.”

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Prayer

Pray through the passage together:

- Thank Jesus for being the faithful and true witness.
- Confess areas of lukewarmness or self-sufficiency.
- Ask God for true spiritual riches, righteousness, and clear sight.
- Pray for renewed zeal and repentance.
- Ask Jesus to deepen fellowship with Him.
- Pray that your church would not be comfortable and spiritually blind, but faithful and alive.

Closing Prayer Example

Jesus, You are the Amen, the faithful and true witness. Forgive us for the ways we become comfortable, self-sufficient, and lukewarm. Open our eyes to see our true need. Give us what only You can give—true riches, righteousness, and spiritual sight. Teach us to receive Your correction as love, to repent quickly, and to walk in close fellowship with You. Amen.