

***Love Letter to
Laodicea***

Revelation 3:14-22

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Dearest Laodicea, I'm writing to any of you who are in some way an angel to your church, a messenger who loves your church and wants to see it alive, on-fire, and in a close relationship with Me.

I am yours truly, the "Amen," your Truth with a capital T, as a True Witness writing to tell you exactly what's wrong with you, My people. Don't be afraid, because I'm also your Faithful Witness; faithful to the death to find a way to fix every failure and sin.

I also write to you as the Originator of the creation of God. Since I made the whole world, I can surely remake your heart and our church into a beautiful new creation.

I have been looking carefully at your actions, taste-testing as it were. You are not a hot cup of tea or a cold soda. You are so middle-of-the-road lukewarm that I actually am overcome with nausea to the point that I'm about to throw up. I know it sounds awful, and I really want to keep you close to me, but I'm about to lose you if something doesn't change.

The reason I'm so disturbed is because you think everything is fine, it's like you're living in a dreamland of luxury and don't even know you are a naked and blind beggar, lying miserably along the road.

Please, please listen to My counsel. I'm Your Heavenly Merchant, stopping by to sell you golden faith that works by love. I also have a gorgeous white outfit I made myself. It's my best work, my character of love to cover you with a perfect fit.

Can you see how beautiful my merchandise is? Maybe not yet. Here's one more thing I'd like to sell you. It's eyesalve for your crusted-over eyes. It's the Holy Spirit speaking through My Word and it will open for your view all the glories of heaven and earth.

It's because I love you that I'm telling you how things really are. You truly can buy all these things if with all your heart you give Me yourself in repentance.

I'm not a bit put off by your situation, I'm actually standing at the door of your heart, knock, knock, knocking. I'd really like to sit down and eat together, talk and share everything, but you'll have to turn the handle and invite me in.

One last thing. Do you remember how I had to face a lot of battles with the enemy? Through dependence on My Father and by using God's word, I overcame and now I'm sitting right next to Him on His throne. You can do the very same thing. And guess what. I'm saving another seat right next to Me just for you.

I close My love letter to you with an earnest appeal: Read it over and over. Listen carefully; the Spirit is calling every church member. We're calling you. Love, Jesus.

Introduction

A Letter from Jesus for the End-Time Church

I believe Jesus wrote this letter 2,000 years in advance because He knew exactly what His people would need right before He returns. It has the perfection instruction that we need to be personally revived and to see our churches on fire with love and faith. The following quotes by Ellen White show clearly why this letter to Laodicea is so important for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit leading to the Loud Cry of the gospel message to the entire world and our readiness for Jesus' return.

The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.

Christ is spoken of as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Thus is symbolized His relation to the churches. He is in constant communication with His people. He knows their true state. He observes their order, their piety, their devotion. Although He is high priest and mediator in the sanctuary above, yet He is represented as walking up and down in the midst of His churches on the earth. With untiring wakefulness and unremitting vigilance, He watches to see whether the light of any of His sentinels is burning dim or going out. If the candlesticks were left to mere human care, the flickering flame would languish and die; but He is the true watchman in the Lord's house, the true warden of the temple courts. His continued care and sustaining grace are the source of life and light (Acts of the Apostles, 585-586).

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" (Testimonies, Volume 1, 186).

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 aroused 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" (Testimonies, Volume 8, 104-106, written in 1903).

Let's make this dream a reality. Let's dig deep to study and experience Jesus' love and salvation on a whole new level. Let's partner with Him to prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit so we can soon be part of the Loud Cry and the coming of Jesus. Let's give Jesus the joy of seeing us change from lukewarm to on-fire with love and devotion to Him.

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 1—From the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness

Icebreaker: Describe a friend you have had who was willing to tell you the truth about yourself rather than just compliment you to make you feel good and how that helped you.

In each of the seven letters in Revelation 2-3 Jesus reveals Himself differently in a way that perfectly matches what that church needs. Let's begin our study of Jesus' love letter to Laodicea by looking at their problems. Then let's take a first look at how Jesus is first described.

1) Read Revelation 3:14-22. What are Laodicea's problems?

2) Jesus describes Laodicea as stumbling around blind and naked, in such a lukewarm stupor that they do not even know they are miserable and poverty-stricken. He is so affected by the wretchedness of their situation that He is sick to His stomach to the point of throwing up. Read the following quotes to gain a clearer understanding of what it means to be lukewarm:

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 (Selected Messages, Volume 1, 357).

As I have of late looked around to find the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, my mind has been much exercised. Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches from which they but a short time since separated. The words addressed to the Laodicean church describe their present condition perfectly (Early Writings 107).

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 (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 959).

In what ways do think this matches your congregation and other Seventh-day Adventist Churches?

3) In each lesson we will look closely at different descriptions of Jesus through which He presents Himself and the resources He offers to Laodicea. Read Revelation 3:14. We usually think of “Amen” as a word to finish our prayers. However, Jesus used that word many times in a slightly different way that is often translated “truly, truly,” “verily, verily,” or “most assuredly.” Read some of the examples of this in John 8:34-36, 51, and 58. Why do you think Jesus takes the word He uses when speaking important things and turns it into a name by which He wants Laodicea to know Him?

4) Read John 18:37-38. According to His words to Pilate, why did Jesus come to our world?

5) Jesus taught many truths about His Father and about the abundant life He came to bring. Read John 14:6. Jesus could have answered Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” by saying, “I am.” What does it mean to you that Jesus is the embodiment of truth?

6) Paul also spoke of the truth in Jesus. Read Ephesians 4:17-24.

- What connections does this passage have to the problems of Laodicea?
- What solutions are found in the truth as it is in Jesus?

In Revelation 3:14 Jesus is not only described as the Amen who tells us like it is, but also as the faithful and true witness. A witness serves in the court when judgment is taking place. The matches the name Laodicea. This name goes way back into Greek mythology. It is used for one of the daughters mentioned in Homer’s epic poem the *Iliad*. The city where this church existed likely got its name because it was founded by one of the rulers of the Seleucid dynasty since the name of the mother of Seleucus was Laodice. The name Laodicea combines two words *lao*, meaning *people*, and *dike*, meaning *just* or a *judicial decision*. Some people take it to mean the title “Justice of the People,” while others say it implies “the people ruling,” or “law-abiding people.” This specific Laodicea thinks they are law-abiding, while in reality they are a people under Jesus’ judgment.¹

7) Revelation 19:11 is the one other place in the Bible which calls Jesus both “faithful” and “true.” What is the context of this description of Jesus?

8) Read Revelation 3:14-17 again. As Jesus tells Laodicea how things truly are, what consequences does He say will happen if they don’t change?

Most translations make Jesus’ words sound very harsh: “I will vomit you out of My mouth!” However, the New International Version says, “I’m about to spit you out of My mouth.” This implies that there is still hope. We typically do not want to vomit and try to find a way to calm our stomachs, so we don’t have to have that awful experience. As we examine the whole letter, we can see that this is exactly Jesus’ attitude—He is doing everything He can to keep from losing His people. He counsels, rebukes, and knocks so He can come in and help. Ellen White added this encouragement about Laodicea:

“Yet the case of those who are rebuked is not a hopeless one; it is not beyond the power of the great Mediator” (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 966).

9) It is still difficult for us to think of a witness who speaks in a courtroom as actually being on our side when we know there is a lot of sin on our records. Read 1 Corinthians 11:32. What do you find in this text that affirms that Jesus, as our witness in the judgment, is actively working to save us?

10) While Revelation 3:14 describes Jesus as the Amen, and the True Witness, who does His best to help us see our dangerous lukewarm condition, it also describes Him as the *Faithful* Witness. Read Hebrews 2:17-18 which uses the word *faithful* to describe our High Priest. What do these verses say Jesus has done to become an effective help to us?

11) Jesus faced every temptation as a human like us, yet lived an amazing life of love and righteousness. That truth should startle us to believe we can become like Him. Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. Paul warns those who think they are standing securely, like the Laodiceans, to watch out or they will fall into temptation. What does he say God is *faithful* to do for such people?

12) Many believe the Laodicean church, as the last of the seven churches, symbolizes the final era of the Christian church that lives during the judgment in heaven and must be ready for the coming of Jesus. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. What will God, in His *faithfulness*, do for the people who are looking to Him for help at the end of time?

13) The Greek word for witness is *martus*, from which we get *martyr*. It is already used in this way in the New Testament in some places like Revelation 2:13 and 11:3. Read Revelation 1:4-6. What encouragement for lukewarm Laodiceans do these words have about Jesus, the Faithful Witness who became a martyr for them?

14) What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 2—From the Beginning of the Creation of God

Icebreaker: Describe someone you know who you think is on-fire for God.

1) Read Revelation 3:14-22. Contrast the character and life of Jesus with the attitudes and lifestyle of lukewarm Laodicea. What does it mean to be lukewarm and what does it look like to be on-fire hot?

Let's look closely at another description of Jesus. Verse 14 reads "the Beginning of the creation of God." At first glance this sounds odd. Other translations help to clarify the meaning including "the Origin of the creation of God" (NASB), "the Origin of God's creation" (NRSV), and "the ruler of God's creation" (NIV). These translations match the meaning of the Greek word *arche* which by definition is "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause."

2) Read Colossians 1:16-18. These verses also describe Jesus as the beginning (*arche*). What do these verses teach about Jesus in relation to the creation of the world?

3) Read Jeremiah 32:17. How does your belief that Jesus created everything and sustains your life impact the way you think, feel, and live?

4) Psalm 33:6, 8-9. What do these verses teach about the speed and power of God's spoken word?

5) Read Mark 1:40-42. How does this story impact you as you consider Jesus' heart and the ability of His word to immediately transform this leper?

6) Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Paul was so excited about the response of the believers in Thessalonica that he could not stop thanking God for them. What did they believe about God's word compared to what a human's word can do?

7) Read the following quote to consider further Laodicea's great need for the creative power of God:

Christ's plan is the only safe one. He declares, 'Behold, I make all things new.' 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' Christ gives man no encouragement to think that He will accept a patchwork character, made up mostly of self, with a little of Christ. This is the condition of the Laodicean church. At first there seems to be some of self and some of Christ. But soon it is all of self and none of Christ. The root of selfishness is revealed. It continues to grow, striking its roots deeper and deeper, till its branches are covered with objectionable fruit. Christ looks with pitying tenderness on all who have combination characters. Those with such a character have a connection with Christ so frail that it is utterly worthless (Bible Commentary, Volume 6, 1101).

Now read both Ephesians 2:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. What connection does Paul make between creation and conversion?

8) The same powerful word of God that created the universe and made a leper's skin beautifully clean can create a completely new heart in a selfish sinner. Read Ephesians 4:20-24. In what ways have you experienced the creative power of God's word to give you a new heart and life?

9) The promises of God are backed by the very creative energy of God to make them happen. Read 1 Peter 1:2-4. What Bible promises are really important to you in the face of your temptations and struggles?

10) In Revelation 3:21 Jesus promises the Laodicean church that if they will overcome as He overcame, they will sit with Him on His Father's throne. Read Matthew 4:3-4. How did Jesus overcome temptation?

11) Jesus not only used promises to overcome the enemy, He also used scriptural commands. Read Deuteronomy 30:11-14. What do these verses say God's powerful word can do in our lives even through His commands?

12) Consider this quote:

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the Word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature, and re-creates the soul in the image of God.

The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" shall man live.

The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds; and it rests with us to determine upon what it shall be fed. It is within the power of everyone to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character (Education 125-127).

What are you spending time on that is keeping you lukewarm which you should replace with more time in God's word?

13) What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 3—From the Garment Seller

Icebreaker. Describe a characteristic of Jesus that you especially appreciate, including a story that illustrates it.

1) A boy at school may be content with his Christmas presents if all of his friends received similar things. A child in a village may not notice the rags she wears if all the other children are dressed like her. Read Revelation 3:17-18. The people of Laodicea think they are so well off that they don't need anything. Perhaps like the children they are only comparing themselves with each other. What does Jesus, the Heavenly Merchantman, do to make them aware of their problems?

2) In Hebrews 1:8-9 Jesus is described as having a heart that loves righteousness. As we look at Jesus and see the beauty of His garments, gold, and eyesalve, we begin to feel our poverty and nakedness. Read Isaiah 6:1-5 and 64:6. How did Isaiah describe himself and any of his good deeds in comparison with God?

3) Read Genesis 3:6-11 and 21. What can we learn from the ways Adam and Eve responded when they realized they were naked and from the way God responded?

4) Read Isaiah 61:10. What did Isaiah call the garments that God can give us?

5) Read Zechariah 3:1-5. What does this passage teach us about how to go from being naked to having clothes on?

6) Read 1 John 1:9-2:2. What further meaning can you gather from these verses to fill out the picture of how we receive salvation.

7) Consider the following statement:

Every soul may say: 'By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which no thread was woven by any human agent. All is of Christ, and all the glory, honor, and majesty are to be given to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world'" (A New Life, 27).

Now read Romans 4:5-8. What does it mean that God counts you righteous by faith?

8) Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. What is especially meaningful to you about Jesus' experience of becoming sin for us, bearing our shame and nakedness, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him?

9) Think deeply about the following quote:

Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God's Word. In amazement he hears the message, "Ye are complete in Him" Now all is at rest in his soul. No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in himself, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God" (Faith and Works 107-108).

Now read Romans 5:1-2. How does it make you feel to know that through repentance and faith you are completely covered by Jesus' gift of righteousness?

10) Read Revelation 19:7-8. Consider also this statement:

By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Rev. 19:8. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Eph. 5:27. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour" (Christ's Object Lessons, 310).

What are some areas in your life that you especially feel the need for Jesus' righteousness?

11) Read Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:8-14. What kind of rags can we take off and what kind of beautiful clothes can we put on as we surrender our old nature and become a new creation by faith?

12) Read Job 29:14-17. How does Job describe his life after putting on a garment of righteousness?

13) Read Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14. What is our hope for having white robes?

14) Reflect on this quote:

"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" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 964).

What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 4—From the Gold Merchant

Icebreaker: Describe someone you know or have read about who you think is a person of great faith.

1) In this lesson, let's examine the gold that Jesus has for sale to help us feel a greater need to buy it. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. What does Peter say is more precious than refined gold?

2) Consider how the following quote affirms the meaning of the gold Jesus is selling us, and reminds us that faith produces love (Galatians 5:6):

The gold that Jesus would have us buy of Him is gold tried in the fire; it is the gold of faith and love, that has no defiling substance mingled with it" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

Now read Hebrews 11:6. Why do you think our faith is the main thing that pleases God and is precious to Him like gold is to people?

3) Since Jesus is the One selling the gold to Laodicea, it is important to know what He taught and lived regarding faith. Read Matthew 21:21-22. What did Jesus say faith is able to do?

4) Read Matthew 8:5-11. What was it about the Roman centurion's faith that Jesus thought was so great He had not seen any like it in all of Israel?

5) How would your life be different if you really prayed with faith and believed everything God's word says?

6) Read Matthew 6:28-30. What needs do you have in which you should trade your little faith for Jesus' big faith?

7) Not everything goes well just because we have faith. Jesus faced incredibly difficult times too. Read Matthew 8:23-27. Jesus had a big faith that could sleep in the middle of a storm. What storms are you facing in which you need to trust Him more?

8) Consider the following quote:

Graces that endure the proofs of affliction and persecution, and evidence their soundness and sincerity, are the gold which is tried in the fire and found genuine. Christ offers to sell this precious treasure to man: "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire." Verse 18. The dead, heartless

performance of duty does not make us Christians. We must get out of a lukewarm condition and experience a true conversion, or we shall fail of heaven (Testimony Treasures, Volume 1, 478).

Read James 1:2-4. How can we approach our difficulties in such a way that they refine our faith, like gold in the fire, to produce beautiful characteristics?

9) Read Hebrews 12:1-4. What encouragement does this passage give you as you seek to maintain faith in the face of fiery trials?

10) Read Galatians 2:16, 20-21. What role does faith have in our salvation?

11) Read Romans 4:16-25. How does Abraham's experience help you understand how to trust God for salvation when you are discouraged and wonder if He can really save you from your sin?

12) Read Romans 10:17. Since reading God's word can increase our faith, what will you do this week to move you towards having greater faith like Jesus?

13) What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 5—From the Eye Doctor

Icebreaker. Describe a time when you were really sick. Who and what helped you get better?

1) Read Revelation 3:18. In this lesson we will examine the meaning of eyesalve and try to understand Jesus' answer for spiritual blindness. What attitudes and actions would you say are typical of people who consider themselves Christians but are spiritually blind?

2) Read Matthew 23:23-26. What did Jesus describe as spiritual blindness?

3) Read 2 Peter 1:5-9. What kind of things does Peter say spiritually blind persons are missing and what have they forgotten?

4) Read 1 John 2:9-11. What did John teach about blindness?

5) From these texts we can see that spiritual blindness is a very serious situation representing a hypocrisy that thinly masks hatred and a religiosity that neglects the most important characteristics of Christ-like justice, mercy, and faith. The Laodicean Church is blind to the beauty of the gold of faith which works by love and the priceless robe of Christ's righteousness.

Consider also the implications of these quotes:

"The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease" (Testimony Treasures, Volume 1, 476).

"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" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

In what ways do you feel you need Jesus to further open your eyes?

6) Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-12. What does Paul say can open our eyes to see the good things God has given us?

7) Read John 16:7-13. What did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit would do for the world and for His disciples?

8) The Holy Spirit works in our hearts and minds to help us see Jesus' righteousness in contrast to our own sin. The Holy Spirit not only shows us our sin, He shows us the beautiful things we can become through God's power. He wakes us up to the seriousness of our situation. Jesus counsels the Laodicean church to anoint their eyes with eyesalve. Read Psalm 139:23-24. In what ways might praying this prayer help us to allow the Holy Spirit to heal our areas of blindness?

9) Consider carefully this quote:

"The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. The 'eyesalve,' the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application; for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. The sinner, beholding himself in God's great moral looking glass, sees himself as God views him, and exercises repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

Read Psalm 119:105 and Proverbs 6:23. What else does God use to help us see clearly and how has this helped you?

10) Read 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. This passage describes a type of blindness that will happen to those who do not love the truth. How can we cultivate a love for truth and correction?

11) Read Luke 18: 9-14. In what ways is the Pharisee in Jesus' parable like the Laodicean church?

12) Read Isaiah 57:15. Why do you think Jesus could say the tax collector went home justified, or declared righteous?

13) Reflect on this quote:

Opportunities are opening on every side. Press into every providential opening. Eyes need to be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve to see and sense their opportunities. God calls now for wide-awake missionaries. There are ways that will be presented before us. We are to see and understand these providential openings (Testimony Treasures, Volume 9, 130).

What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 6—From the Heavenly Merchant

Icebreaker. What is one thing you would really like to buy if you had plenty of money?

1) Read Revelation 3:18-19 and the following quote:

The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly merchantman, laden with riches, calling from house to house, presenting His priceless goods" (Bible Commentary, Volume 7, 965).

Jesus is selling the incredibly valuable goods of faith, love, the Holy Spirit's healing power, and His own righteousness. Since we often say that these things come only as a gift of God's grace, what do you think Jesus means when He tells poverty-stricken Laodicea to buy them?

2) Read Matthew 13:44-46. What further insights do these two parables teach about Jesus' invitation to buy from Him? Consider again after reading the following quotes:

In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price....

We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it....

There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost" (Christ's Object Lessons, 116-118).

3) Since we are so spiritually poor, about all we have to buy with is our sinful self. Read Matthew 16:24-26. What did Jesus say was essential in order to get to be with Him as His disciple and gain eternal life?

4) Read Mark 10:17-22. What did Jesus say was necessary for the rich young ruler to do in order to have eternal life?

5) Jesus loved this young man yet was willing to risk losing him by telling him that entrance into God's kingdom requires obeying God's commandments, not merely in form, but with a fully devoted life. Read Mark 10:23-27. What encouragement did Jesus give regarding how it is possible to make such a huge surrender?

6) This focus on buying and obeying can make it appear that salvation is through our own works. Read Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-7. What does this passage teach about mercy and repentance in relation to buying salvation from God?

7) Read Acts 2:36-39. What did Peter say it was necessary to do in order to receive forgiveness and the Holy Spirit?

8) Read 2 Corinthians 7:10-11. What does true repentance look like?

9) Read Acts 5:31. In what ways is it encouraging to you that God has promised to give you this kind of repentance?

10) God has promised to give us faith, love and righteousness in exchange for our sin as we repent and surrender. He even gives us the ability to repent, helping us to hate sin and turn from it. Read Galatians 6:14-15. What further promises do you find in this verse to help you choose Jesus instead of things that seem desirable in the world?

11) Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, and 17. What has Jesus done to make it possible for us to live for God instead of for ourselves?

12) Jesus told the Laodicean church that "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent." Read Hebrews 12:4-11. Why should we be encouraged when God rebukes and corrects us?

13) What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 7—From the Dearest Friend

Icebreaker. What various things have you done in Bible study, prayer, Christian fellowship or worship that has especially helped you have a closer relationship with God?

1) Read Revelation 3:20. Consider also this quote:

Without Christ the heart of man is cold. But when one feels his need of the Sun of Righteousness; when he comes to Jesus, saying, Lord, I am sinful, unworthy, helpless; save me, or I perish, he is accepted in the Beloved, and his heart is warmed by the rays of divine love. By this sincere coming to Christ, he opens the door to him who has long been saying: '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.' He is accepted, and he knows what it means to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. God says, Let there be light; and there is light. The soul possesses an abiding Christ, who is the light of life (The Youth Instruction, September 28, 1899).

What do the various parts of Revelation 3:20 mean to you, specifically that Jesus knocks, that we open the door, and that He invites us to eat together?

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

3) Some scholars believe that Revelation 3:20 is taken from chapter five of the book *Song of Solomon* and that the husband represents Christ and the bride represents the church. Read Ephesians 5:25-32. What do these verses show about what the kind of love Jesus has for the church?

4) Consider the warnings in the following quote:

I saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove. Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness, to remove before they can open the door. Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door. All this rubbish must be taken away, and then they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in.

Oh, how precious was this promise, as it was shown to me in vision! 'I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.' Oh, the love, the wondrous love of God! After all our lukewarmness and sins He says: 'Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.' This was repeated by the angel a number of times. 'Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings'" (Testimonies, Volume 1, 143).

Read Luke 10:38-42. Mary finally found the “one thing that is needful” while her sister was worried and troubled. What types of things have sometimes made it difficult for you to have a close relationship with God?

5) Read Ephesians 2:11-21. What has Jesus done in order to make our hearts a place where He can live and have a close relationship with us?

6) Read Ephesians 3:16-21. What else does God do through the Holy Spirit so Christ can dwell in our hearts?

7) Read and reflect on this quote:

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord.”

In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that I by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God's word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven (The Desire of Ages 390-391).

In many cultures, eating together is primarily for family members and close friends. Jesus invited the Laodicean church, with all of their problems, to eat with Him. Read Jeremiah 15:16. What ideas can you think of that can help people enjoy God's word like a delicious meal?

8) Read Philippians 3:7-14. What did Paul feel it was necessary to do in order to have an intimate and growing relationship with Jesus?

9) Read the following quote:

The True Witness says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' Revelation 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, the disposition to open becomes weaker. The impressions of the Holy Spirit if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of life, and of the great eternity beyond. Our condemnation in the judgment will not result from the fact that we have been in error, but from the fact that we have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth (The Desire of Ages 489).

He is not repulsed by scorn or turned aside by threatening, but continually seeks the lost ones, saying, "How shall I give thee up?" Hosea 11:8. Although His love is driven back by the stubborn heart, He returns to plead with greater force, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." The winning power of His love compels souls to come in (Christ's Object Lessons 235).

10) Are there any areas of your life where you feel you are ignoring the knocking of Jesus?

11) Take a few minutes to consider the following questions and discuss with others:

- Is my relationship with God an obedient and intimate relationship?
- What, if anything, is blocking me from being closer to God?
- What can I do to grow in my relationship with Him?

12) Consider the freedom Jesus gives you.

It is the sinner himself who has barred the door. Will he take down the barriers? Will he unbolt the door? The locks are all on his side of the door, not on the Saviour's side" (Review and Herald, March 5, 1889).

What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Love Letter to Laodicea

Lesson 8—From the Conqueror

Icebreaker. Share a struggle with a habit or attitude that you have experienced. Talk about what has helped you overcome, even if the victory is not yet complete.

1) Read Revelation 3:21. What do you think it means to overcome as Jesus did and to sit with Him on His throne?

2) Read Luke 4:1-4. How did Jesus overcome and what can you learn from it for the temptations you face?

3) Reflect on the following quote:

In the wilderness of temptation, Christ passed over the ground where Adam fell. He began the work where the ruin began, and on the point of appetite He overcame the power of the evil one in our behalf. Satan left the field a vanquished foe, and no one is excused from entering the battle on the Lord's side, for there is no reason why man may not be an overcomer if he trusts in Christ. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Temperance, 282).

In the name and strength of Jesus every youth may conquer the enemy today on the point of perverted appetite. My dear young friends, advance step by step, until all your habits shall be in harmony with the laws of life and health. He who overcame in the wilderness of temptation declares: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Temperance 190).

How does it affect your thinking and feelings to know that Jesus overcame the enemy in the same way that we can overcome?

4) The Bible gives us clear direction on what is right and wrong. More than that, God's word also has His power behind it to create in us the ability to do what He commands. Read 1 John 2:14 and 2 Peter 1:2-4. What additional insights do you find in these two passages on how you can use the word of God to overcome sin?

5) Read 1 John 4:4 and 5:1-5. What does John say makes it possible for you to overcome the world?

6) Read James 4:4-10. What additional insights can you gain from these verses on how to overcome wrong desires and friendship with the world?

- 7) Read Hebrews 12:1-4. What are the results of focusing our attention on Jesus' victory?
- 8) Read Ephesians 1:19-23 and 2:4-10. In connection with God's throne, what has God done for Jesus and how is that related to what He does as He saves us?
- 9) Read Hebrews 8:1-2, 6, and 10-12. What did Jesus do when He sat down at the right hand of God's throne?
- 10) Jesus works constantly to bring the New Covenant into our lives. Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6. As we overcome and are seated in heavenly places, in what ways do we get to participate in His work?
- 11) Prayerfully reflect on the following quote:

Some, I saw, would gladly return. Others will not let this message to the Laodicean church have its weight upon them. They will glide along, much after the same manner as before, and will be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Those only who zealously repent will have favor with God. 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.' We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.

It is our privilege to have faith and salvation. The power of God has not decreased. His power, I saw, would be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob, crying: 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.' Enduring faith has been dying away. It must be revived in the hearts of God's people. There must be a claiming of the blessing of God. Faith, living faith, always bears upward to God and glory; unbelief, downward to darkness and death" (Testimonies, Volume 1, 144).

What do you think God is asking you to fully gain the victory as you wrestle with God regarding certain temptations and sins?

- 12) Jesus promised the Laodicean church that they could join Him at His throne if they overcome. Read Revelation 7:9-17. What encouragement do these verses give you that help you want to be there and believe it is possible you will make it?
- 13) What can you do this week to cooperate with Jesus in moving yourself and others from lukewarm to on-fire for Jesus?

Postscript

From the Spirit-Sender

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:22).

Here are some important reminders of the impact the letter to Laodicea will make and how we should only speak the truth in love, letting the Holy Spirit make the close application of its message.

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 (Early Writings, 270).

When men arise, claiming to have a message from God, but instead of warring against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, they form a hollow square, and turn the weapons of warfare against the church militant, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials. God has not given them any such burden of labor. They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message. He wounds only that He may heal, not cause to perish. The Lord lays upon no man a message that will discourage and dishearten the church. He reproveth, He rebuketh, He chastens; but it is only that He may restore and approve at last. How glad my heart was made by the report from the General Conference that many hearts were softened and subdued, that many made humble confessions, and cleared away from the door of the heart the rubbish that was keeping the Saviour out. How glad I was to know that many welcomed Jesus in as an abiding guest. How is it that these pamphlets denouncing the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon were scattered abroad everywhere, at the very time when that church was receiving the outpouring of the Spirit of God? How is it that men can be so deceived as to imagine that the loud cry consists in calling the people of God out from the fellowship of a church that is enjoying a season of refreshing? Oh, may these deceived souls come into the current, and receive the blessing, and be endued with power from on high (Testimonies to Ministers, 19-23).

Christ knows the spirit we cherish. The faithful Witness says, “I know thy works.” [Revelation 3:15.] The thoughts of the heart are not hid from Him. And by our words and deeds we shall be judged in the last great day.

God will not vindicate any who, in associating with opposers to our faith or with our own brethren, manifest toward them a harsh, denunciatory spirit. Those who do this may appear to have a zeal for the truth, but it is not according to knowledge. To be unkind and denunciatory and to entertain evil thoughts and harsh, severe judgments is never the fruit of that wisdom which is from above, but it is the sure fruit of an unsanctified ambition, such as caused the condemnation of Jesus (Manuscript 11, 1888).

Written by Scott Griswold. Available at reachtheworldnextdoor.com/spiritual-resources

¹ Here are some examples of the interpretation of the meaning of Laodicea's name.

“Tried by the people”

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Laodicea.html>

“the people ruling”

<https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/248/Laodicea.htm>

“Justice of the People”

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2993/kjv/tr/0-1/>

“People of justice or law-abiding people”

<https://www.denizlihotel.com/laodicea-on-the-lycus-turkey/>