



Historic Situation	Name Interpretation	Positive Affirmation	Corrective Exhortation	Eternal Motivation	Prophetic Revelation	Personal Application
Ephesus First Church	Let Go/Leave Darling/First Love	Perseverance Discernment	Left (not lost) First Love	Eat From the Tree of Life	Approximately 70AD to 170AD	Remember Repent and Repeat
Smyrna Persecution	Myrrh when it's Crushed is Fragrant	Rich in Poverty and Suffering	NONE	Receive the Crown of Life	Approximately 170AD to 312AD	Better not Bitter when Crushed
Pergamos Satan's Throne	Perverted/Adulterous Marriage Union	Remained True Didn't Renounce	Sexual/Spiritual Adultery/Idolatry	Hidden Manna and New Name	Approximately 312AD to 606AD	Purity not Adultery with the World
Thyatira Jezebel Doctrine	Continual Sacrifice	Love Faith Service Perseverance	Tolerate Deceptive Seductive Teachings	Authority Over the Nations	Approximately 606AD to The End	Bought at a Price as a Living Sacrifice
Sardis Rest on Laurels	Invincible Remnant	Hard Work Good Name	Wake Up and Watch Before it's too Late	Clothed in White Name in Book	Approximately 1520AD to The End	Be Watchful for The "Thief in the Night"
Philadelphia 2-Brothers Built	Brotherly Love	Little Strength kept God's Word/Name	NONE	Kept from the 7- Year Tribulation	Approximately 1750AD to The End	Known as Disciples by love for another
Laodicea Lukewarm Water	The Laity Ruled as the Diocese	NONE	Rich but Poor See but Blind Clothed but Naked	Sit with Jesus on His Throne	Approximately 1900AD to The End	Hot or Cold for and to Jesus

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KAPONO: Would you join me and bow your heads in a word of prayer? Lord, in Jesus' name, Lord, would You send Your Holy Spirit down? Lord, would You give us a focus? I don't know what's coming, but from the title, Lord, woo! Lord, we're going to need Your help. Would You focus us this morning? Clear our minds. Clear our hearts, Lord, that we may just be in tuned with Your word, Lord. So bless the teaching. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. You can be seated. Thank you. Glad you're here. Those of you online, we're glad that you're joining us as well. Last week I put out a prayer plea for Johnny Baginski who was hospitalized because of tumors in — I mean, riddled throughout both his body and brain.

Will you continue to pray for Johnny, his older brother, Xavier, who you may know from the fellowship here, and his mom, their mom, Michelle, and specifically a miracle for Johnny, supernatural strength and wisdom for Xavier, and that supernatural comfort of the Holy Spirit for their mom, Michelle. So as the Lord reminds you, if you would please. And thank you for that.

All right. We're going to finish *Revelation Chapter 3* today with this seventh of seven letters to the seven churches, the church of the Laodiceans. I'm wording it that way for a reason, as you'll soon see.

I want to, by way of a preface, say that this study of the seven churches in *Revelation Chapters 2 and 3*, have been, still are the most important part of the entire *Book of Revelation*. Do you know why? Because it deals with where we're at right now: The church age, church history.

Now, Lord willing, next week — and I want to be careful when I say this because I might want to do a review of the seven churches. Not necessarily. Actually, I'm very excited to get to *Chapter 4:1* because — and for those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you already know what's ahead. *Chapter 4:1*, starting next week, Lord willing, is everything that is to take place yet future.

In other words, the end of *Chapter 3* ends church history. And then in *Chapter 4:1*, we have the rapture of the church taking place before the 7-year tribulation, when John — I'm not going to preach next Sunday's sermon, but I just want to give you a taste or a teaser, as they

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say — John is told to, at the sound of the trumpet, “Come up hither.” He is caught up in *Revelation 4:1*. Check this out. John gets raptured next week. How's that?

And then everything from *Chapter 4:1* on through to the end of the book in *Chapter 22*, is all yet future. Remember that divine outline? Just real quick. John is told, *Chapter 1*, to write that which he has seen, past; that which is now, present; and that which is to take place, ‘meta tauta’ in the Greek, here after, after these things. Facebook, beyond, after, meta, ‘meta tauta’ in the Greek. That's all future.

So *Chapter 1* was past. What was *Chapter 1*? Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected, and glorified, seated at the right hand of God, past tense.

Present: *Chapters 2 and 3*. That's where we're at right now. Church history. The seven churches representing the Church Age in its entirety.

Chapter 4:1 and on are all about what's going to happen in the future. Write that which is to happen, ‘meta tauta,’ after these things, after the things of *Chapters 2 and 3*, after the Church Age.

Chapter 4, 5, and 6, wow! You know what? I'm going to give you some homework. How's that? I'm just kind of in one of those — my dad was a high school teacher, by the way, and he would do that. And then I would just go into his office at the house and steal the answers to the test because he was my dad. So I did really good in this class. I can say that. That was 50 years ago.

So anyway, I'm going to give you some homework. Read *Chapters 4, 5, and 6*. Actually, I tell you what. I'll make it easier for you. You'll be tested on this. So just read *Chapters 4 and 5* because *4 and 5* are really the heaven view subsequent to the Pre-tribulation rapture that takes place metaphorically, symbolically, in *Chapter 4:1*.

Chapters 6 through 19 — you can read those if you want. You'll get extra credit. How's that? That's all about the 7-year tribulation. *Chapter 20* is about the Millennium, the 1000-year reign. And *Chapters 21 and 22*, all yet future, are about the new heavens and the new Earth. That's the divine outline that we have in *Revelation Chapter 1:19*.

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So we come to today, the end, and we will come to the end of this seventh letter that brings to an end the church age with this last church, the church of the Laodiceans. All right, let's get to the text. If you're able to stand, I'll ask you to. You can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is fine.

Just follow along as I read. John, by the Holy Spirit, is writing. Jesus is dictating this letter that he is to write and send to this literal church. **“To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!**

So because you are lukewarm— neither hot nor cold— I am about to vomit you out of My mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are *[Look at this list]* wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

[Now verse 19 is going to be very important here shortly] **Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, *[or zealous]* and repent. *[And verse 20, a very well-known verse]* *[Behold]* Here am I! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.**

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. *[And then He ends the letter as with all the letters]* He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Father, we want to have ears to hear. Lord, give us the salve of the — eye salve of the Holy Spirit, so we can also have eyes to see what it is that You want to show us in this letter that we have in our Bible to the church of the Laodiceans.

Clearly, there is so much here that You want for us to know, see, hear, but more importantly, take heed. So Lord, will You show that to us? And when You do, do so with such clarity that it's so clear that a fool could not err thereof, so that we don't leave this church service today

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the same way we came to this church service today. We ask You for this and thank You in advance for this. In Jesus' name, amen and amen.

You can be seated. Thank you. So I realize that the title of today's teaching, pardon me, can at first, maybe, seemingly put condemnation on Christians, but that's not what I'm intending by titling it this way. Rather, it's more about conviction, not condemnation on Christians, but conviction to take our spiritual temperature as Christians. Here's why.

This is the last of the seven letters to the seven churches representing the condition of the church in the last days. Would you agree with me that this is what the condition is of the church today? I know that's strong, but I think it needs to be.

The church has become lukewarm. And isn't it interesting? We talked about this. I won't take too much time on it. But it's very important, by way of a reminder, that we understand these seven churches represent the church age in their entirety — seven the number of completion — and they have to be in that exact order, or it doesn't work.

So we're ending with this lukewarm church. It's the last church, the last of the seven churches. As if God were to say, this is the last church in the last days, what it's going to be like, so that you can know what the world will be like, specifically the church will be like at the time of the end. He's given us a gauge here.

And again, it's not condemnation, it's conviction. And the litmus test by which to know the difference between the two is this: Condemnation will distance me further from Jesus, whereas conviction will draw me nearer to Jesus. When the Holy Spirit in that still, gentle, small, refining, convicting voice puts His finger on something in my life that needs to go, that's called conviction.

So I go to the Lord, draw near to the Lord. And James says, **“When we draw near to the Lord, He in turn draws near to us.”**

Condemnation doesn't do that. Condemnation says, I wouldn't go anywhere near the Lord. I'd like lay low from the Lord if I were you. I'd kind of keep a low profile here. And that's exactly what Satan is intending with the condemnation.

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But you see, *Romans 8:1* says, **“There is there...”** And somebody needs to hear this right now because this is not in my notes. So whoever this is for, it's your fault that I have to digress. **“There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.”**

If you brought a heavy, crushing weight of condemnation to church with you this morning, you leave it right here because you do not carry that. He took that from you, paid for that instead of you, and there's no more guilt or condemnation on you now. It's as if you've never sinned. Justified. I love that word. It's one of those words that sounds like what it is. It's just if I'd never sinned. Wow.

So when God sees me, He sees not my sin, but His Son who paid for my sin. Are we good? Again, this is probably for somebody here today. Because unless and until we grasp that and understand that, this letter is going to mess us up.

How's that for an introduction? No. For real because here's the thing. These are Christians. Wait. The Laodiceans? The church of the Laodiceans are Christians? Yeah. Are you sure? Yeah. How do you know? Jesus said they were. He did? Yeah. **“I discipline those whom I love.”**

These are children of God. I spank my children. That's how you know that you're my child. Because I'm not going to spank somebody else's child. Though there are times where you wish you could. That's how you know. I love those — be zealous and repent. And I love those — whom I discipline, I love. I'm disciplining you because I love you because you're My child.

These are children of God. These are believers. And this is a church. They're just lukewarm believers. Well, one more thing. Bear with me, please. Let's just say, on a scale of 1 to 10, you were asked certain questions like, for example, on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place your prayer life?

Well, of course, we're always going to shed ourselves in a favorable light. Of course, some of us, you know, we want to try to be humble, and we're very proud of our humility and humble about our pride. And we'll say, you know, I'd say probably about, you know, maybe a five, six, seven, eight, you know, in that area.

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Oh, really? That's how you see it? Same scale, how do you think God sees your prayer life on that scale? Where would you be on a scale of 1 to 10? Okay. Minus one. Is that on the same scale? I'm going somewhere with this.

This church of the Laodiceans was so lukewarm that — and didn't know it, oblivious to it. Which is why Jesus in a much-needed sanctified strength, says, you see yourselves this way, but I see you this way, and they're the polar opposite. But you're still My children, so I've got to correct you. I got to discipline you. I got to give you a spanking, a spiritual spanking. I want to take you through the letter. And as I do, I hope that all of us, myself included, will have the eye salve of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see and our ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us. I'll start quickly with this map that was from our overview because I want to point out two cities close in proximity to Laodicea. This is going to be germane to our understanding.

Notice first, Hierapolis. The guys maybe in the back can put this online for the online viewer. The first is Hierapolis, and the second is Colossae. This is Colossae we know as the Colossians. This is the church that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians to. By the way, Hierapolis is about six miles away from Laodicea, just to kind of put into perspective so you can get the visual.

Now, why do I point this out on the map? Because in the letter to the Colossians, there's a reference to Laodicea, and it's not good. In fact, there's a couple of them, starting with Colossians 2:1, the Apostle Paul writing, says, **“For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.”**

Meaning that Paul had never gone to Laodicea. But this is a church that is close in proximity there in Colossae to Laodicea. Now, it gets worse. *Chapter 4:12-16*, he continues.

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” [*Forgive me for chuckling, but it's almost like Paul's saying, why can't you be more like him?*]

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For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house. [They had a home church]

Now when [Listen very carefully to this] when this epistle [Speaking of this one to the Colossians] is read among you, [Which is what they did] see that it is read also in the church [Notice] of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

Wow, that is corrective. In other words, Paul writes this letter, sends it to Colossae, and he says, hey, when you guys get done reading this, I want it read to the Laodiceans. And it's not good. There's no commendation for this church. There's nothing good.

Jesus says — did you catch that while we were reading the text? Jesus says not one thing good about this church. Not one. The Philadelphia church: He says not one thing bad about the church. There's no rebuke for Philadelphia. And there's no commendation for Laodicea.

Let's talk about the chart from the overview as well. I want to draw your attention to the name interpretation. Again, this is going to be germane to our understanding. Laodicea is the combination of two Greek words, Lao or Lāo and Dikao or Diceo or Dicea, Diocese. Leo = laity. In other words, the name is the nature, right? Laodicea, the name means the laity were ruling.

That's why Jesus was on the outside knocking to get back in. And he's not even in the church, let alone ruling the church at the center of the church, calling the shots for the church. No, the people are. The laity rule.

This church was ruled by the people, not Jesus, which is why, by the way, the other six letters: to the angel of the church in Ephesus, to the angel of the church in Smyrna, to the angel of the church in Pergamum, to the angel of the church in Thyatira, to the angel of the church in Sardis, to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, to the angel of the church OF THE Laodiceans.

It's not even — they kicked Me out. It's their church. They're calling the shots. They're ruling the church. It's not the church of Jesus Christ. It's the church of the Laodiceans. And that's significant, isn't it? What? Would you agree with me? And I don't want to bash the

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church, like the church needs to be bashed. I think we do a good enough job without being bashed in the condition we're in. The church is buss-up.

I wonder if this could be one of the reasons why. We're the ones making the decisions, not the Lord. We're coming up with worldly strategies and gimmicks, and it's not our church to do that with. It's His church. We have no right to do that. He is the one that decides. It's His church. I'm not mad. I might sound like it. Can I just, give you a few more fast facts about this very interesting city and by extension, the church in this city?

First, Laodicea was on the cutting edge, medically. Like with the other cities, they had a worship center for Asclepius. Remember we talked about Asclepius, the god of medicine? And they were famous throughout the region at that time for this eye salve, this medication, this ointment, this pharmaceutical. Was that too much?

They had this medical school and had this eye medicine that came out of their medical school. And this is why they made so much money. Because there's a lot of money in Big Pharma.

Here's another one. They were rich. They saw themselves as rich. Jesus said, “**...You say I am rich**” because they were. They were extremely wealthy, so much so that they were considered the banking center of the region. And in turn, this afforded them the luxury of being known for their fashion and their garments made of this very expensive silk, smooth, shiny black wool.

I started to connect some of the dots as to why Jesus words this letter the way He words this letter. Do you think they would have got it when He starts talking about putting eye salve on your eyes so you can see because you're blind? You think you're rich. No, you need to buy gold from Me so you will be rich.

Now here's another thing about Laodicea. They had some serious problems. And one of the biggest problems was that the city was situated in such a way that it became vulnerable militarily, which is why they had to make political compromises to ensure that they wouldn't be attacked and destroyed.

And actually, even worse, Laodicea had a very serious problem with their water supply, which also, again, made them vulnerable to attack. Though they were situated next to

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Colossae — in fact, if you want to put the map back up, there was a river, freshwater river running between both Colossae and Laodicea. But the problem is, is that it would dry up and with it so too would the water supply for Laodicea dry up. So now where are we going to get water?

Well, they're going to send an email to Hierapolis because see, Hierapolis, six miles away had these pure, magnificent, spectacular fresh, natural hot springs. You can go online, and it's breathtaking to see these hot springs on these cliffs overlooking the teal-colored Mediterranean.

So I mean, why not. Laodicea has the money. They can afford it. So what do they do? They build this elaborate and expensive aqueduct system to channel the water from Hierapolis down into Laodicea using this aqueduct that they built six miles long. Problem. By the time the water reached Laodicea through this aqueduct from Hierapolis, it had become lukewarm.

See where Jesus is — I mean, come on, everything Jesus said would have pierced their hearts. Hit them right between the eyes, as we say. And that's not all. By the time it reached Laodicea from Hierapolis, not only was it lukewarm, it was polluted. So when people in the city of Laodicea would drink this water, they would get so sick that they would vomit it out of their mouths.

Is everybody okay? Did you have lunch before? This is the context in which this letter was written. And lest we be too quick to dismiss this as not being for us because all I got to do is turn on my water supply, and I'm not getting sick and vomiting it up out of my mouth.

Well, this is not in the physical, but how about in the spiritual? Let's take and tackle the text before us today by asking ourselves some questions, and again, myself included. I hope you know that whenever I pose questions — which I didn't plan this.

Last week there were five. This week there are five again. That was not intentional. But these five questions are specific to the temperature of our Christianity. Questions to ask ourselves concerning whether or not I have become a lukewarm Christian.

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If you don't mind, I want to draw upon the definition that I used, and then also an example from First Service, which we talked about this in the prophetic sense, the prophetic application of this. And boy, does this have prophetic application in terms of Bible prophecy.

But let me define lukewarm so you can kind of get a better understanding. To be lukewarm is to lack interest or lack enthusiasm, making one indifferent, usually resulting from the neglecting of and or acclimating to the surrounding conditions.

Here's the example. Let's say that I have somebody bring me up a I mean, piping hot cup of coffee and bring it up to the pulpit. Don't bring me a hot cup of coffee, okay? If I drink it, I'll be in the restroom for the entirety of — so everybody's going to start bringing me coffee, so I'll — never mind.

So this is an example. Let me have this one, okay? So someone brings me up a piping hot cup of coffee, as we say, and I put it right here on the pulpit. But if I neglect it or I'm too busy for it or have no interest in it, what's going to happen? By the end of the sermon it's going to become lukewarm. Why? Because it's acclimated to the room temperature.

That's what a lukewarm Christian does and is and becomes. We've acclimated to the conditions surrounding us. The church is acclimated to the temperature of the world and the things of the world. Some of you are thinking to yourselves, it wouldn't just be lukewarm by the time you're done, it would have mold on it, as long as you go. But you get the idea, right? It would — the hot has become lukewarm. Why?

Because it was neglected and left to acclimate itself to and acquiesce to the environment surrounding it. This is why it is that the church is in the condition that it is today. The church has not influenced the world. The world has influenced the church. The church has acclimated itself to the world, the things of the world. Is it any wonder that the church has become full of lukewarm Christians?

They're still Christians. We'll still see them in heaven. But they're lukewarm, and the correction is be zealous and repent. I'm going to have to discipline you, but I discipline those whom I love as children, as a parent disciplines his child.

That's how you know that you're My child. I'm going to have to discipline you. Why? Because I love you. If I didn't love you, I wouldn't bother. We speak the truth in love

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because of love. We discipline our children because we love them. If we didn't love them, we wouldn't bother disciplining them. Am I right? Do I say that every week?

All right. This brings us to our first question. Please think this through with me. I will, along with you. Am I making decisions instead of Jesus? Now, let's really think about this. This church of the Laodiceans was calling the shots. Am I the one calling the shots in my own life, or is the Lord? Who's at the center of my life? Me or Jesus? Who's calling the shots? Me or Jesus? Who's making the decisions? Me or Jesus?

Could it be said of me, that, oh, that's the Christian life of and belonging to JD? In other words, it's me. I have become the Laodicean Christian, and as such, the lukewarm Christian. I've acclimated to my surroundings. Because is that not what the world does?

One of the things I had to learn early on, and it came hard because I have to learn the hard way. I have the scars to prove it. At least I learned. I like to think I'm learning. When I sold my business and started my first church on the mainland, many years ago, now, one of the things I had to learn was that a church is an organism, but a business is an organization, and they are entirely different things.

The church is a living organism. We are the body of Christ. Different parts of the same body. So what happened was I came out of the business world. I owned my own company. I'd been in the corporate world for so long and here I sell my business and I start up this church. And what do I do? I bring my business template into the church. It did not take me long to realize, it ain't gonna work that way here. I cannot do that.

Because see, in the business world, you have to make decisions. They come at you, and you don't have time. Sometimes you got to make quick decisions and take risks, and you're the one — the buck stops with you if you own that business.

So you bring in that model into the ministry, and the Lord's going, hey! What are you doing? You're not the CEO anymore, I am. Did you run that by Me? No, I'm so used to just making the decision because I was the boss. Well, JD, you're not the boss anymore. I'm the boss now. You don't make any decisions unless you run it by Me first.

What is it about us that thinks that we don't need to petition the throne and seek the Lord and ask of the Lord before we make decisions? And sometimes these decisions are life

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decisions, man. They are major decisions. And we're not inquiring of the Lord? We're not seeking the Lord? We're not praying and asking the Lord?

Early on in our marriage, I was, before I started my business, I was working for Mercedes Benz. And this is right about the time when Lexus came out. And they headhunted me, and they were like, I mean, I won't tell you the amount. Sign-up bonus, thousands of dollars just to walk in the door. You can pick out the colors. We're going to build this brand new. This is right when Lexus and Acura and Infiniti wanted the share of the luxury car market, which was dominated by Mercedes and BMW and etc. So I get a call and they're like, hey, we want a Mercedes boy to run our Lexus store.

I'm like, I'm your guy. And so they offered me, your wife will drive a Lexus. You'll have a Lexus. Here's a sign-up bonus. Here's a guaranteed two-year contract. A lot of money. I'm like, well, certainly this is the Lord.

[Laughter]

Oh, wow. You did not hesitate to laugh on that one, did you? I know you're laughing with me, not laughing at me. Right? You know, being the godly husband that I am, I go home to my wife, I say, honey, you're not going to believe this. God is amazing. Look what the Lord has done.

And my wife looks at me with that look that only a wife can give. Guys, you know what I'm talking about. That look. And she says to me, as only a wife can say. Did you pray about it? I'm like — I get all defensive. I'm like, (Looking uncomfortable and irritated) what's there to pray about? This is a no brainer.

Are you kidding me? I'm mean, you can drive a brand new — of course she was driving a Mercedes. I guess that was kind of down. No wonder she — anyway... (Chuckling)

Pray? Okay. I'll pray about it. So, Lord, this is You, right? Amen.

[Laughter]

No. For real. I'm being very candid with you. So she's like, no, I don't feel peace about it.

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And husbands, by the way, when your wife does not feel a peace about it, don't go against that. You will rue the day. And here's another thing. I'm just telling you what I would want someone to tell me if I were you, especially if you're newly married.

Oh, how I wish somebody would have told me this. I could have saved myself — never mind — a lot of problems. Listen to your wife and don't ask her to explain it logically. No. For real. Because God did not make her that way.

Remember, she's your helpmeet. She's there to help you, not hinder you, not stand in your way. She's a protection for you. She's your counterpart, equal to you, joint heir, Peter says. Not inferior. Not superior. She should never be over you or under you. Next to you, side by side. That's a helpmeet. She's there to help you and God will use her intuition. (Growl)

The world calls it women's intuition, discernment, whatever. You want to spiritualize it? Fine. The Lord will give your wife that intuition and discernment and not give it to you so that you'll listen to her because He's trying to protect you from you.

Then what do we do? We just, we blow it off. Come on, honey, why don't you feel a peace about it? I just don't feel at peace about it. Can you please explain to me why, logically?

Okay. You get the paper out. This is back in the day. So you've got the columns: Pros / Cons. Okay, here's mine. I got, like, a scroll. Pros. The column is just, you know, pages. Cons. Nothing in the con column. What's your problem, honey?

She goes, you know what, honey? I just don't feel a peace about it. So this is the one time I'm happy to report — because I think I'd just gotten so buss-up over this so many times prior that I went against 'I don't feel at peace about it,' I thought, you know what? Maybe this is not the Lord. So I went back to the throne.

And here's what the Lord ministered to my heart. If you take this — and I got a multitude of counsel — you are going to sell your soul to the company store, and they're going to own you. And you're serving in the church. You're an elder on the board. You're a lay pastor in the pulpit, and you can kiss that goodbye because they own you. Are you kidding Me?

They're not going to just pay you that much money and give you these cars to drive and give you this contract to sign.

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You're selling your soul, man, and you can't sell your soul because you've already been purchased with a price. I already purchased you when I died for you. So you're not for sale. So it's a no. And I would be grossly remiss if I didn't confess that I wasn't very happy about it because I was — I had already spent the money. The sign-up bonus was already spent. I already knew what I wanted to buy.

Get this. A guy takes the job. First of all, I got calls from guys in the business going, did you suffer blunt force trauma to the head?

[Laughter]

What is the matter with you? Do you know how many people would have killed to get that offer that was made to you? They made me the offer, and I was their first pick. And then when I turned it down, they headhunted a guy out of California. I ended up getting to know him. He was a brother in the Lord. Believe it or not, he takes the job.

I told him, I said, I declined it. He's like, why? I said, well, it's just my wife told me no.

[Laughter]

Six months later, he's out, sued for breach of contract, has to pay back the sign-up bonus, and it goes into a two-year-long litigation. I go back to my wife. I'm like, honey, thank you. What else do you not feel a peace about?

[Laughter]

Oh, don't make decisions unless you have the Lord's green light to do it. And never think that God is like, no, I don't want you to have that. No. **“Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above, and there's no variation or shifting of shadows.”**

If it's good, it's God. If it's not, it's not God. Because God's not going to give you a snake if you ask for a fish. If it's good, God wants you to have it. If it's according to His will and it's good for you and it brings Him glory, you've got it. You may not get it when you want. It's in His timing. He's not going to withhold it.

I love how Paul writing to the Romans — and we'll get to the second question — he frames it in a question that is just, I mean, obviously inspired by the Holy Spirit. He says, think about this logically. This is where you can get logical, guys, okay? It's okay.

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Does it make any sense to you that if God was unwilling to withhold His only begotten Son to die for you, does it make any sense that there would be anything that He would withhold from you?

Talk about putting it into perspective. How about when Jesus says, ask Me anything. Anything? Yeah. I think we pray too low. We pray too small. So we go to the Lord.

And you know, here's the Lord with the whole of Heavenly Host at His disposal. The heavenly hush. Shh, JD's going to pray. Quiet, everybody. Get ready. Whatever he asks. If it's according to My will, you guys get down there and make it happen.

Remember Daniel a couple weeks ago, started to pray, 21 days. The angel says, the day you started to pray, we were dispatched to come and answer your prayer. That's chicken skin, man.

In the spiritual realm, wait, JD's going to pray. You guys ready? Ready. All right, here it comes. And then here I come. Father, bless this meal to our bodies and...

Oh, false alarm. Sorry you guys. Go back to... Here I was ready to give him anything. I have everything right here that he needs to parent his children, to be a good husband to his wife, to be a good pastor to his church, to be a good Christian witness in the community. I have everything he needs.

He's got a decision to make. He wants to know what My will is. Here he comes. Oh, he's not coming. He's not going to ask Me. I guess he doesn't need Me. Oh, I guess he's going to make — he's got this one. He's going to make this decision on his own.

Well, I clearly spent way too much time on that one. Well it's going to get just more convicting. *Verses 15 and 16* have our second question. And again I know it might seem or sound like a firm grasp of the obvious, but let's think this one through too. Am I hot, cold, or lukewarm for Jesus?

Now please don't misunderstand me because the lukewarm Christian has been compromised in acclimating to the pollution of the world. I was thinking. I mentioned this First Service. You know that Olympic ceremony, the 33rd — 33rd. You know why 33 is a big

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number in Satanism and Masonry? Because that's the age that Jesus was when He was crucified.

You know why 13 is supposedly an unlucky number? You can go to hotels, and they don't even have a 13th floor. The elevator goes from 12 to 14. It's like, hey, what's on 13? You know, makes you want to know more. What are they hiding from us? No, there's no 13th floor. They're superstitious. Why?

Because 13 is unlucky. Why 13? Oh, you didn't know? Because Jesus had 12 disciples and He was the 13th. 33. 33rd degree Mason, very, very satanic. How many angels? What was the percentage of angels that were cast out of heaven with Lucifer? A third, 33.

Don't think that's just coincidence. It's not. So the reason I brought up the Olympic ceremony — did you guys — yeah, I better not look. Don't raise your hand if you watched that. It was the most blasphemous satanic ritual. Vile and evil and demonic to the core. I won't even repeat the scene in part of that ceremony because I don't want to lend creed to the devil.

Isn't it interesting that they only blaspheme Jesus and no other religious leader? Have you ever wondered why there's no false Buddhas? There's only false Christs. Because you don't counterfeit something that's not the genuine article. We've talked about that. That's why you never see a counterfeit \$70 bill.

What's the point? So why are they going to mock Jesus? Because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, God incarnate. And Jesus has been given the name above all names by which we must be saved. That's why people, when they curse, they curse using the name of my Jesus and your Jesus.

Have you ever had anybody say when they hammer their thumb, oh, Muhammad! Never going to happen. The next time somebody — and I shared this First Service. I know I've shared it before. I hope you don't tire me sharing it. But this is a big issue. When I was a young Christian, this used to — man, I — of course I had more energy then. I used to get pretty militant.

Somebody would take the name of Jesus and, you know, Jesus Christ, I'd say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! What are you doing? That's my Savior. Listen, if you're going to blaspheme

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the name of Jesus, why don't you be an equal opportunity blasphemmer and blaspheme Muhammad while you're at it?

I mean, don't be militant like that when you're talking to them. But ask them. Ask them sincerely, can I just ask you a question? Why do you think it is that nobody takes the name of Muhammad or Buddha or anybody else? But why is it the name of Jesus? I'll tell you why it's the name of Jesus. Because it's the name above all names.

So back to the Olympic ceremony. I never watched it, but boy, did my email blow up from friends going, did you see that? I'm like, no. And then they described it and I said, no! But here's the thing. There was a conspicuous silence among Christians. Some of whom really enjoyed the ceremony. Have they actually become that lukewarm, acclimating to the world that they no longer discern how evil something like that is?

Is it possible this is a problem for some? I'll try to reconcile it. But when Jesus says that I wish you were either hot or cold, but because you're lukewarm, polluted, I'm going to — I'm about to vomit you out of My mouth. What He's basically saying is your state, spiritually, is nauseating to Me. It makes me sick. Just like that water you got from Hierapolis makes you sick, your spiritual condition and temperature makes Me sick. That's why He's correcting them.

And I realize there's a sanctified strength in what Jesus says in this letter to this church. But it needs to be so. Would to God that more pulpits today would be willing to speak the truth in love, as hard as it is. You know what's happened, right, is, hey, we don't want to, you know, we don't want to offend them.

So we'll kind of, you know, — we want to — we don't — but if I say that, that'll offend them. But if I say this, I'll offend them. You know, so the church has now acclimated and acquiesced to the world too. So it's not just the Christians in the church, it's the pastors of the church.

Question number 3. This one is — this one's just mind boggling. How can it be that we would see ourselves so differently than Jesus sees us? In a word, self-deceived. Self-deceived, having believed I'm good. No you're not. Am I seeing myself as Jesus sees me? Or am I seeing myself as I want to see myself?

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And again, this is the sin nature, the human nature. Very quick to always shed ourselves in the most favorable of light. You know, when you're reading through the Proverbs, you get into the teens, you know, *Chapters 13, 14, etc.*, there's what I call the contrasting proverbs where it says basically this: The righteous do this, but the wicked do that.

And here's your incensed response. Those wicked people! Because after all, you're the righteous. No. Nathan comes over to visit. You are the man! You're the wicked. Oh, you saw yourself as being the righteous in the Proverb? No wonder you have it underlined in your Bible. How do we see ourselves?

Because, I mean, let's — let's get real here. Real talk. Right? They saw themselves as rich. Jesus says, you're not rich or poor. You're bankrupt. They saw themselves as being able to see with this eye salve, this cutting-edge pharmaceutical from their medical school. But you're blind. You think you guys see. You're blind.

You guys think you're all that with that clothing line. You're the fashion runway of the known world at the time. And you got this fancy Nancy — if your named Nancy, we love you — but this fancy Nancy wool, black wool that they were famous for. And you got the latest model's going down the runway.

Am I saying that right? I'm innocent concerning the things of the world. They call them models, right? It's a runway, a fashion runway, right? So you're all, you're all proud of your new clothing line. What color is it? Well, it's black again. But, you know, but they were famous for it, and it was very expensive. And only the rich could afford it. And they saw themselves as being all that.

And Jesus says, you're naked. You think you're clothed. You're naked spiritually, you're spiritually naked; spiritually, you're spiritually blind; spiritually, you're spiritually bankrupt. What are you gonna do about it? I'll tell you what you need to do about it, what you and I need to do about it. We need to go back to the perfect mirror of God's law.

You know, mirrors don't lie. I wish they did. You know, I shared, we have a mirror in the restroom backstage, and I kid you not, I think it's one of those mirrors that makes you look thinner.

[Laughter]

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No. For real. I look at myself in the mirror before I come here to make sure — I'm not vain. I just, I try my best to not look hideous. That's a win. If I don't look hideous, that's a win. That's all I'm shooting for, okay? But then I come over here and I use this restroom. I love this mirror. In fact, if it's gone, you'll know who took it. I took it home because I look in the mirror and go, Well,

[Laughter]

I think I lost like 30 pounds since I left the house. And then I go back home, I gained it all back. It's one of those, you know, like the mirror, deceptive mirrors, you know.

But the word of God, the law of God, is likened unto a perfect mirror, not trick mirror. What does a mirror do? James says, you look at yourself in the mirror. The hearer of God's Word, not the doer, he sees himself in the mirror, he's like the guy who sees himself in the mirror, walks away, forgets what he saw, and doesn't do anything to change what he saw.

Listen, how many of us, especially — come on, I won't look at you. Don't look at me either. We look in the mirror, we're like, oh! Jesus, come quickly please. Because, I mean, there's hair where there shouldn't be. There's no hair where there used to be. Is this too much? I'll keep it somewhat, pastoral.

But what do we do? We look at ourselves that we see ourselves in our true condition. And what do we do? We start making adjustments. And for some of us, it takes a little bit longer than others to make the necessary adjustments. Why? Because I need to correct that. I need to correct that. I wish I could still correct that. That ship sailed. I'm making corrections.

Now, let's transpose that over to the perfect mirror of God's law. We see ourselves as God sees us. Law breakers, transgressing God's perfect law. Yeah, but you know what? I'm not too bad. I think I'm about — I think I'm okay with 4 out of 10. No, you're still a law breaker. You break one, it's like breaking the whole thing.

But we're still — you know I'm not a murderer. Yeah, but you — did you covet? Oh. Yeah but... No. That mirror is not lying. That's your true — that's how God sees you. Well, that's not good because what I see in that mirror ain't good. That's good.

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What do you mean? Because the Holy Spirit comes like the schoolmaster, the tutor takes you by the hand to the Savior who fulfilled the law.

See, the law was not for us to keep. We're all sinners. We've all fallen short of God's perfect standard of righteousness. Broken the law. So as law breakers, now we need the Savior because we've transgressed the law. And there's a penalty for that and it's the death penalty.

And that's why Jesus died in our stead and paid in full with His death because we were sentenced to death for our sin. So when I see myself — this is why, by the way, when we read the Word of God, it's actually reading us. When we search the scriptures, it's actually searching us. This is why it is, by the way, I believe too that Christians don't read the Bible as much as they should.

Again, I'm not trying to condemn anybody. Because, I mean, sometimes — I'll speak for myself because I'll take one for the team, being the great pastor that I am — I'll read something and I'll just go, oh! Ahh! Oh! I am so convicted. Not condemned. I'm convicted.

But God loved me enough, cared enough about me to — because only God knew that about me. Don't get weird on me for saying that. But that's what God's word is. It's sharper than a two-edged sword. It's alive and it cuts between bone and marrow, soul and spirit. And you go through the word, the word God goes through you and cuts out what shouldn't be there. It gets it out and kills it before it kills you.

And that's the nature of God's Word. And when I'm in the word, I see myself as God sees me. And here's the good news. When God sees me, He sees not my sin, but His Son who paid for my sin. And I'm justified, which is a great word that sounds like what it is. Just if I'd never sinned. Why? Because of Jesus.

Question number 4. I'll be quick. Thanks for your patience. Am I repenting and disciplined by Jesus? Repentance is largely misunderstood. Can I just simplify it? It's just a change of mind. You change your mind and then God changes your heart. God will never force Himself on you. No. He waits for us to change our mind. That's repentance.

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And Christians need to repent, have a change of mind, and do an about face, a 180, and don't despise the chastening of the Lord because that's how you know you're a child of God is because you're getting a spanking from God.

And here's the thing. John — not John. Pardon me. *Romans 2:4*, Paul says, **“It is the kindness of God that leads a man to repentance.”** Not the justice of God, the wrath of God. No, the kindness of God. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, it is a godly sorrow.

There's two kinds of sorrow. There's a sorrow of being caught and the godly sorrow that leads to a genuine repentance.

Example. You're driving — by the way, I haven't — I'm a — I know I've shared my traffic sins with you, confessed them, but I have not received a speeding ticket, which means nothing except that I just haven't gotten caught.

[Laughter]

So anyway, exceeding the speed limit, you get pulled over exceeding the speed limit. The police officer comes up to the window, asks for the driver's license, registration. What do you say? I'm sorry. No, you're not. What are you sorry for? You're sorry that I caught you. That's what you're sorry for. If you were really sorry. If it were really genuine sorrow, you would change. You would repent. You would change the way you drive.

That's what repentance means. And that's what Jesus is saying. I love you. You're still My children. You're still saved. This is still My church. But I love you too much to leave you in this lukewarm condition. You need to be zealous and repent. Remember what lukewarm means. It means indifferent, uninterested. No. I want you to take interest in, be zealous to repent. And you're going to get a spanking. You just wait until your daddy gets home and you're going to get a lickin'.

Last question, and this is the way I want to end, and I again appreciate your patience. I wish I would have saved more time for this because this is a very well-known verse. Actually, it's in *verses 20–22*. And the question is this: Am I willing to open up the door to Jesus? Now, doubtless you've heard *verse 20* in particular used in evangelism. **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”**

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Anyone who opens the door, I will come in. Wait, I missed something. I do it all the time. It's not, if you open up the door, it's **"If you hear My voice and open up the door, I will come in and eat with you and you with Me."**

Now, stay with me. I'll try to be as brief as I can. Please, I don't want you to tune me out because you're going to miss out on something that is so rich. A lot of speculation on the interpretation of this verse.

However, when you factor in the cultural dynamics in the Middle East to this day, this is not so much about opening up the door, it's about eating together because that is intimate in the Middle East.

Do you know when the Arab people, my people, sign a deal, the way they seal the deal — they don't sign anything — they eat, they break bread together. That's how they sign a deal. That's how they make a deal. Signing something means nothing. If you eat and break bread together — this is the communion table, by the way. That bread it's in you is the same bread that's in me. We drink from the same cup. It's a common union and we are in agreement.

And we miss this in our Western culture, to our own peril, I might add. You know how the proverbs are replete with — and husbands, please don't elbow your wives. You know how the proverbs — I'll finish with this. This is huge. Please.

You know how the Proverbs are replete with husbands who have contentious wives? (Chuckling) Starts off, it is better to eat on the rooftop a crumb of bread than prime rib in a house with a nagging wife. Then even that's not far enough. Now it's better to eat in the wilderness than it is to eat the fatted calf in the house with a contentious wife.

I mean, the roof wasn't even far enough. Apparently, the wife came up to the roof and started nagging him.

So now he's out in the wilderness where she can't find him. Remember when we went through the Proverbs? I'm not beating up on wives. I'm just trying to make a point here. The point isn't so much about the contention, although that's part of the principle, it's about the eating, the breaking of bread together. It's such an intimate thing.

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My family and the Arabs know how to have family feuds. I'll tell you, if you ever want to know how to have a family feud, you email the office. I tell you, seven years, it was a seven-year tribulation. I don't know if it was planned that way. Seven years my mom's side of the family would not talk. It made the holidays horrible because. Oh, they're coming over? I'm not coming. Seven years, family feud.

Finally, we're going to make a peace deal. How are we going to do it? Food. We're going to reconcile. And my mom and my aunts planned for months this — I'm getting hungry just thinking about it. I fast on Sundays and now I'm salivating.

But I mean, they planned this meal for months. And then the two sides came together, and they made peace. And to their dying day, that peace remained. And it was over the table of eating together.

You know when I was — back when I did biblical guidance. We don't call it counseling. We never give medical or legal or financial advice. We do offer biblical guidance. The pastors will offer biblical guidance. I used to tell couples especially, you know, man, they're going at it. Just, grr! What, me? What about you? What did I get myself into? I sold my business for this?

I used to say to them, listen, here's what you're going to do. (Struggling to find words) I want you guys to go out to dinner together and I want you to order a nice meal and I want you guys to break bread together. And I want you to come back and see me. And then never came back. You know why? Because it worked.

There's something about — you know, there are certain God-given hormones that are released in our bodies when we eat together with somebody. But if there's strife at that meal, it has the opposite effect.

Okay, I'm almost done. But can I just make a suggestion in closing? That this is a reference to the *Song of Solomon*. **“Behold, I stand at the door...” “...and if anyone hears My voice.”** Not My knock. Hears My voice. And the sheep know their shepherd's voice.

That's a Bridegroom to His bride, man. The bride knows the Bridegroom's voice. The bride hears the Bridegroom who's at the door to take her to the place that He prepared for her in

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his Father's house. Oh, come on, pastor, you could get that out of anything. Maybe. Can I just close with *Song of Solomon, Chapter 5:1-2*? *Song of Songs*, some of your Bibles have it.

Listen to this. You know that in Israel they would never let the young Jewish boys read this book until they were of age. It's very sensual. That's another thing. Young couples, married couples, lock the door, turn off your devices and read the Book of *Song of Solomon* together. And then come and see me. (Chuckle)

Listen to this. It's a poetic book. Listen to this. **"I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones! I sleep, but my heart is awake. It is [Listen] the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night."**

Guys, listen, I think we need to get — we need to take a course on romance 101 again. I think we need a refresher course. You know when you're first courting, you're of course, you're both on your best behavior. The way — even the way you talk so sappy, I mean, you're buying her flowers, opening the door for her, taken her out for dinner. Then once you got her, it's over. You don't tell me you love me anymore. I told you I loved you when he got married. That's good enough. Wow.

Oh, guys. Man, listen, this is the way God wired your wives. You wonder why your wife is — forget lukewarm. We're talking freezer cold here. Do you wonder why? Maybe this is why. When was the last time you had a nice, kind, romantic — maybe a little bit, you know, you fill in the blank kind of, you know, thing? When was last time you bought her flowers?

I can't do that. She'll think I did something wrong. Well, you did! Reminds me of that Mark Twain quote. And I'll close with this. At the end of the day spank your children, for certainly they did something wrong.

[Laughter]

Come on up Kapono. I'm going to quit while I'm ahead. Why don't you stand up? I hope this helps. Does this help? Let's all take our temperature. We need a spiritual thermometer. I won't tell you what my temperature is. If you tell me what — I tell you

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what. You tell me what yours is. I'll tell you what I want you to think mine is. How's that one?

Oh, Lord, You're so good. This is a hard letter, but it's a love letter, nonetheless. Oh, how You love us, Lord. Lord, thank You for the gentleness with which You correct us. Thank You that You're not harsh with us, that You're the good Shepherd that leads us gently and lovingly.

So Lord, now we need for You to take it from here because we kind of covered a lot of stuff here and not all of it was that easy or amicable to hear, let alone heed. So Lord, I just pray that the Holy Spirit would be granted unfettered access to that deep recess of our hearts as we get a temperature reading on the condition of our spiritual lives towards You. And if it is that we're lukewarm, that we would be zealous to repent, that You would correct us in Your love for us when You discipline us. That we would come back and oh, how some of us, I know, miss being on fire for You like we once were. Rekindle that, Lord, that that flame would burn bright and new once again. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.