



KICK OFF

What holds a church together?



KEY VERSE

Revelation 2:4:
But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.



BIG IDEA

Christ commands his church to love



INVESTIGATE

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Read Revelation 2:1

1. Who is the message from and who is it for?
2. What do the stars and lampstands represent?
3. What does this verse say about Christ and the church?

A COMPLIMENT

Read Acts 20:17, 28-31

4. What problem did Paul say Ephesus would face?

Read Revelation 2:2-3, and 6

5. What are the things that Ephesus is doing well? What might this look like in the lives of the Ephesians?
6. What motivates them in doing these things?



DIG DEEPER

In Revelation chapters 2-3, there are seven churches that are given specific messages by Jesus Christ.

There is a common structure to each of the letters. They all contain:

- a) An opening description of Christ, the one speaking, which reflects back on the image of Christ in chapter 1.
- b) Commendations (except for Laodecia)
- c) Rebukes with consequences for continued disobedience (except Smyrna, and Philadelphia)
- e) Calls to repent or hold fast
- f) All end with a promise for those who overcome, for the faithful.

While the messages are directed to specific churches, the whole book was sent to *every* church, so these rebukes and commendations serve as warnings and encouragements for all.

A REBUKE

Read Revelation 2:4-5

7. What is missing from the church in Ephesus? What might this look like in the lives of the Ephesians?
8. What does Jesus say about churches that don't continue to love?

A REWARD

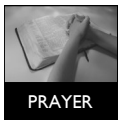
Read Revelation 2:7

9. What are we conquering? How do we overcome?
(Read 1 John 5:1-5)
10. What is the reward for conquering?



THINKING IT THROUGH

11. In what ways might love be missing in our church?
12. How can we be better at expressing love?



Praise God for the challenges raised by God's Word through this study

Praying for others in your group:



How has our love for God and others changed since those days when we first came to know Jesus? Have we lost something?

About Ephesus:

The church in Ephesus was established by Paul. (Acts 18:19-21, Acts 19:1-20).

The Greek goddess Artemis was worshipped in Ephesus. The growth of the church in Ephesus, meant a loss for local businesses which made shrines and idols for Artemis, so riots erupted. Paul was forced to leave. (Acts 19:21-41)

When Paul returned, it was to an established church, and he spent his time encouraging the elders. (Acts 20:17-38)

Paul wrote to the Ephesians from prison in Rome, but the writing of Irenaeus tells us it was likely John who later tended that church (along with the other churches of the region).

PRAISE GOD for his care for his church, and for his Word which guides us.

CONFESS to God our lack of love for others in the church

ASK GOD to renew us in love for him, and for one another in the church

PRAY ALSO for those among us facing difficulties, and for those new to the faith. Pray that we will be able to help them.



Revelation 2:12-17