

2011 | | WCC
Weekly Sermon/Small Group Series
 1/30/2011

Small Group Leaders Guide

A New Year a New You:
 A New Passion for Truth (Rev. 2:12-17)
 Bill Warrick

Time		Questions	Answers
10	<u>Hook</u>	<i>Use this question to engage group members in conversation with an introduction question that helps them get to know each other better.</i>	
	1	Where was the roughest neighborhood you have ever lived in terms of violence, immorality, or crime?	Open Answer.
10	<u>Book</u>	<i>Use these questions to set the tone for the study and give group members a background in the text you will be studying.</i>	
	2	When you think of a city in the world that could be described as “the place where Satan has his throne,” what cities come to mind? What did the pastor mean when he said, “Thanks to the internet, every city in the world is now Las Vegas?”	Sin Cities could include Dubai, Las Vegas, Hollywood, Bangkok, etc. The internet has brought the temptations of Sin City to the most remote parts of the world.

25	Look	<i>Use these questions as entry points into the passage of scripture.</i>	
	3	<p>Read Revelation 2:12-17. For what is the church commended? What recent events have recently challenged their willingness to stand strong for God?</p> <p>For remaining strong in the face of persecution and trials. Specifically one of their own, Antipas, possibly one of their pastors, was recently killed for taking a stand for Christ.</p>	
	4	<p>The church is not merely being challenged from outside worldly forces, but also from within the church. What is the biggest challenge facing them from within their own community?</p> <p>There are false teachers who are trying to persuade people to depart from obedience to God's word and tolerate the intolerable.</p>	
	5	<p>Twice in this letter Jesus mentions a sharp sword. To what characteristic of God does this sword metaphor refer? (Hebrews 4:12, and Revelation 1:16.) Why do you think Jesus uses this image twice in his letter to Pergamum?</p> <p>The Word of God, or the truth of God that Jesus is speaking. The lies and deception that are being taught by those within the church are in need of being corrected by God's truth.</p>	
	6	<p>The structure of verse 13 could almost be drawn as a picture of the challenge that the church is always facing. What observation can you make about the words Satan and the pronoun My, referring to Jesus, and in what order they are written?</p> <p>(If someone has the New American Standard Version, have them read it. It uses my four times in one verse.) <i>Satan's throne – God's people of faith – Satan's throne</i> Jesus is making the point that you live in the tension of following me as Lord, while being surrounded by the forces of Satan.</p>	

	7	<p>Look back at the story of Balaam in Numbers 22:1-20. Why does Balak want Balaam to curse Israel? What does he do to try to enlist his services as a prophet? Why does Balaam keep listening for God's voice even after God has told him what to do?</p>	<p>He knows Balaam's God has power and in order to protect the Moabites he asks Balaam to curse Israel so that Israel will not overthrow Moab. He offers money, fame and even sends off his most famous officials to try to bribe Balaam. He is committed to bless or curse as God says, so he must have been hoping that God would change his mind and Balaam could make some money off of it.</p>
	8	<p>Read 22:21-40. To what lengths does God go to try to keep Balaam from sinning and cursing Israel? In order to get Israel into a state where God and Balaam would curse them, and Balaam could get paid, Balaam gives them false instruction that led Israel into sexual immorality with the Moabites in chapter 25. Read Numbers 31:13-18 and 2 Peter 2:14-16 to see God's perspective on Balaam's actions.</p>	<p>He speaks through a donkey, appoints an angel to block his path, three times gives Balaam a blessing over Israel in chapter 23. The essence of Balaam's false teaching in the end of Chapter 24 is that because Israel was sealed as God's chosen people, nothing they did could cause them to lose God's favor. Hence they took that grace as a license to sin.</p>

15	<u>Took</u>	<p>Use these questions to help the group take the meaning and apply it to their lives in tangible ways. Applications can be cognitive (change my thinking), behavioral (change my actions), or emotional (change my feelings). Be sure to turn these applications into prayer requests for the upcoming week as you close the study.</p>	
	9	<p>How do these two sections of Scripture, Numbers and Revelation 2, argue that we need to be meditating and studying the Scriptures on a regular basis?</p>	<p>We need to regularly rethink and repent. We need the light of truth to shine on the lies and deceptions that we hear every day from those who may even be claiming to follow Christ.</p>
	10	<p>The Nicolaitans taught that "What you do with your body does not affect your souls." Therefore, you can practice sexual immorality like the world does and it won't impact your relationship with Jesus. How is this similar to the teaching of Balaam in Numbers?</p>	<p>They entice people to sin without recognizing that sin drives a wedge between people and God. Sin leads to suffering. Our bodies and souls are not connected.</p>

11	To what group of people is the church to stand in judgment of as a community?	We are called to judge the church, those who profess Jesus as Lord. We are not called to judge the world or condemn them for simply behaving according to their fleshly ways.
12	Where do we hear false ideas in our life today that imply, "What we do with our body does not affect our soul?" Or make the false claim that "Our beliefs do not need to make an impact on our behavior?"	False teachers who claim all you need to do to be a disciple is simply believe in your heart. Those who say that it is ok to accept new modern "progressive" sexual standards like pre-marital success or homosexuality.
13	Each letter ends with an exhortation, or encouragement, that references the coming reality of Heaven. Note: Tree of Life, Victory over the Second Death, a New Name, Hidden Manna (Eternal Exodus into Heaven), etc.) How can we find encouragement and strength from the promise that Heaven is coming and this world will pass away?	Open Answer. We need to set our eyes and minds on the realities of Heaven. We need to remind each other that this present struggle is only a light and momentary affliction.

<u>Pray</u>	Pray for those who are trapped in sexual immorality and seeking to find freedom and strength to break free. Pray the Holy Spirit would convict those who are not seeking to turn from their behavior.	
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