

REVELATION

JESUS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS CHURCH

Battle for the Mind



Big Idea:

Jesus frees us from lies and brings us into the truth

Opening Question:

What is something you believed as a kid, and then later found out it is not true?

The apostle John, now in his mid-80s, is living in exile, having been shipped off to the prison island of Patmos. He is there because he could not abide by the emperor's edict that all Roman citizens had to worship Caesar as god.

While there, John was given a fresh revelation of Jesus that shares seven messages to the churches in Asia minor that are relevant to us today.

1. Have you ever experienced what you would call a "vision" or a dream from God? If so, what was that like for you? If not, do you think it is possible?

READ Revelation 2:12-17

2. What do you notice about these verses? What questions do you have?

The city of Pergamum was living in the midst of a fierce battle for people's minds. There was a prominent temple in the city dedicated to a "god" of healing and their symbol was a snake. People flocked from all over to receive the touch of the snake. In scripture the snake represents satan, who tries to lead people away from God. So when Jesus says "satan has his throne", he is saying that Pergamum was a center for ideas that blinded people to the truth about God, themselves and the world. Jesus shows up with a sword in order to demonstrate that there is a spiritual battle going on for the minds of the people.

3. How do you see "the battle for the mind" playing out in our culture today?

Jesus commends the church for remaining true to his name. And then he says, "*I have a few things against you*". Jesus goes on to say that there were some among the church who were holding to teachings (Balaam and Nicolaitan) that enticed them to sin with their bodies (ie: eating food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality). The main idea of the teaching was this; *what we do with our bodies doesn't matter because the body is separate from the soul.*

4. Do you think this Balaam or Nicolaitan idea is true in our culture today?

In these passages of Revelation, Jesus is reminding us that there is a battle going on in the spiritual universe. Evil is trying to win our hearts and minds. Our bodies are not neutral territory. What we do with our bodies can either move us away from or towards God.

5. Jesus refers to eating and sexual practices, what are some other ways that what we do with our bodies either draw us near or away from God?
6. How have you witnessed what people do sexually with their bodies hurting their relationship with God, themselves or others?

Our bodies are more than flesh and blood. God grieves when we use and abuse ourselves, thinking that what we do with our bodies doesn't matter. Many of us have been using and abusing ourselves for far too long with alcohol, food, sex, self-harm and other ways. Jesus offers to come to us with his sword and fight this battle with us. As we remain in his word (the Bible) we can renew our minds and orient them to God's truth.

READ Hebrews 4:12, Romans 12:2

7. How have you experienced the word of God renewing your mind in the past?

MICRO GROUP

Get into smaller micro-groups of 3 or 4 for the remainder of this discussion guide. Keep these same micro groups throughout this series.

READ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

8. Share with the group one way you would like to grow as you work to see your body as a temple. (ie: healthy habits, sexual practices, etc.)

Pray for each other.

H2O – Habits to Outcome

Spiritual habits (Bible engagement, prayer, community, journaling, serving, sabbath, silence and solitude, etc.) help us to encounter Jesus. Every encounter with Jesus has the potential for **Character Transformation*** and **Calling Activation***. This series will focus on the spiritual habit of **Obedience to Jesus**.

Challenge:

Practice listening to God and doing what he says. Set aside a few minutes a day to sit in silence and ask God to show you something he wants you to know and or do.

***Character Transformation** means that your character is demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit as you become more like Jesus. (Galatians 5:22-23)

***Calling Activation** means that you are living out your primary calling as a disciple maker. (Matthew 28:19-20)