



# 3

Uncompromising  
with Truth

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WHEN HAS  
IT BEEN  
NECESSARY  
FOR YOU TO  
ADAPT OR  
ADJUST?

The  
**POINT** >

When it comes to biblical truth about Christ,  
there is no room for compromise.

## > REVELATION 2:12-17

<sup>12</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup> “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’



# FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.

## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // BIBLE

The Bible consists of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments and is the only inspired written Word of God.

## Message to Leaders

Scripture is the inspired Word of God. It has been literally “breathed out” by the Holy Spirit and is the means by which God reveals Himself, as well as His purposes for the world and for us. Those who trust in any other sources of wisdom are guilty of the same sins as the church in Pergamum. We can know God and His will only through the Scriptures.

## › Engage Option 1

Select two students to come up front to play “Does the Bible really say that?” Read verses from the Bible and common misquotes of the Bible. Ask students to pick whether or not it’s in the Bible. The student who gets the most correct wins. Say, “**Knowing what Scripture says about God allows us to avoid false teaching and live according to the truth.**”

## › Engage Option 2

Place sayings throughout the room with false statements people say about God, and place what the Bible actually says beside them. Say, “**The world will try to deceive us and teach us lies about God, but we should look to God and His Word as our source of truth.**”

## › Engage Option 3

Search the Internet for “Basics for How to Study the Bible - Desiring God.” Play the video as you begin the session. Say, “**In order to know Christ and understand God’s Word, we must study the Bible and ask God to help us to better know Him.**”

**NOTE:** Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.

## LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

**ITEM 3:** Engage students in the session by displaying the **Compromise** poster.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

**THE POINT** // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.



## THE SETTING

Following letters to the churches in Ephesus and Smyrna, the risen Lord next addressed the congregation in Pergamum. Speaking through the apostle John, Jesus delivered to the church's pastor the words He wanted the believers to hear. As with the other six churches, He commended and corrected them; specifically, Jesus urged them to be conquerors for His sake in that place where "Satan's throne" (v. 13) resided and to hold fast to the truth.

### **FACT:**

Of course, you know that chameleons can change color. But do you know how they do it? Underneath the top layer of skin is a layer of crystals that they can turn or manipulate to reflect light differently.<sup>1</sup>

Chameleons are fascinating little creatures. If you place a chameleon on a patch of green grass, it will begin to turn green. If it's on a brown tree branch, it will turn—you guessed it—brown. We all know that chameleons change colors to blend in. It's their way of adapting to their environment. They also change colors to warm up or cool down to communicate fear or anger. These are all ways of adapting to or interacting with their environments.

It's not only chameleons who are adaptable—people are, as well. Sometimes, being adaptable is necessary. The past year has been a huge lesson in adapting to change, as many students throughout the US have been required to adjust to online learning, ever-changing schedules, and more.

Other types of adaptability, however, are altogether unhealthy. Some people are like chameleons, and in whatever situation or environment they may find themselves, they take on the "color" of their surroundings. Their thinking and behavior tend to blend in and look like the world around them.

For followers of Jesus, our true color should never be compromised. We have been called to live a life devoted to Jesus and to never compromise the truth of who He is and who we are in Him. The church at Pergamum compromised their faith in Christ by becoming like those around them. As a result, Jesus gave them a harsh correction.



# IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.

## REVELATION 2:12-13

*“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”* **REVELATION 2:12-13**

Jesus’ third message was to the church in Pergamum. With a population around 160,000, Pergamum was the religious and cultural center of the region, and its library contained as many as 200,000 papyrus and parchment volumes. Pergamum was home to four temples to pagan gods—built upon the city’s most prominent place, the acropolis, which rose nearly one thousand feet above the surrounding city.

In the Roman Empire, Pergamum had been given the rare power to carry out capital punishment, which was symbolized by the sword. To the church in Pergamum, Jesus made it clear that He is the one with the authority to carry out judgment, identifying Himself as the one with a double-edged sword. When John saw Jesus in his earlier vision, he described a two-edged sword that came from His mouth (Rev. 1:16). The writer of Hebrews declared the Word of God was “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). By His powerful word, Jesus truly is the One who ultimately judges.

Jesus was well aware of the city where this church lived. With all its pagan worship, Pergamum was a city where Satan’s throne was. Within this type of culture, the believers were to be commended because they were holding on to the name of Christ. To their neighbors, Jesus was just one of many gods, but these believers held strong to the truth about Jesus and would not deny their faith.

While we don’t know much about Antipas, tradition says that Antipas was ordained by John as the pastor of the church in Pergamum during the reign of the Roman emperor Nero. When Antipas refused to stop preaching the gospel and ministering to the broken, further refusing to worship Caesar as lord, he was boiled alive in a large metal bowl. Again, this is tradition and not verifiable, and while we don’t know the details of Antipas’ being martyred, we do know:

- **He stood for the truth of Jesus Christ.**
- **He ultimately paid the supreme price with his own life.**

Persecution continues today around the globe. Many believers, like Antipas, are standing strong in their faith, even if it means dying for the cause of Christ. We too need to stand with Christ—no matter what—serving as His faithful witnesses.

### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 22)

- 1** What does a faithful witness look like today?
- 2** What are some temptations Christians face living in a non-Christian culture?



# IMPART

THE POINT // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.

## REVELATION 2:14-15

*But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. **REVELATION 2:14-15***

Even though Jesus had praised their witness, He still condemned several actions being lived out among the people in this church. While many were remaining faithful to God and doing the works of Christ, others were compromising the truth by mixing it with false doctrine. Jesus mentioned two specific errors:

- **The teaching of Balaam:** During Israel's wilderness wanderings, Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of the Israelites. They had come out of years of bondage in Egypt, and Balak was afraid they were going to rise up and attack his people. Balak sent word for Balaam, a prophet, to come and place a curse on the Israelites so his army could destroy them. God, however, had told Balaam not to place a curse on them, but instead to offer words of blessing. Balaam knew he could not curse the Israelites, so instead he taught Balak how to manipulate the Israelites, enticing them to sin. He tempted them by causing them to believe eating food that was sacrificed to idols was acceptable. Balak also led them to believe sexual immorality was okay. Balak could not outwardly defeat Israel, but Balaam taught him how to defeat the Israelites through moral and spiritual compromise (Num. 22–25).
- **The teaching of the Nicolaitans:** Little is known about this sect, but it appears to have allowed people to live without rules in self-indulgence. It may have been closely linked to the teachings of Balaam. This would explain the attraction of pagan idolatry and sexual immorality. Like those following Balaam, the Nicolaitans were leading people to compromise the truth of Christ.

The church today must be careful not to exchange truth for lies and never to make compromises concerning God's calling on our lives. We are immersed in a "do what makes you feel good" culture, but this is not what Christ teaches. We are called to Christlikeness, purity, sacrifice, and holiness—compromise can never be a part of a believer's life when it comes to the truth of Christ.

*We are called to Christlikeness, purity, sacrifice, and holiness—compromise can never be a part of a believer's life when it comes to the truth of Christ. #BSFLtheChurch*



### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 3** What are the consequences of compromise when it comes to biblical truth?
- 4** What kinds of dangers or consequences do we face when we believe something that isn't true?
- 5** How can we determine whether a teaching or teacher is false?



## REVELATION 2:16-17

*Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'*

### REVELATION 2:16-17

Jesus concluded His message to the Pergamum church with a stern and solemn warning that they must repent. He assured them that a failure to do so would bring dire consequences. Failure to turn away from their sin and follow Jesus would result in His words coming against them like a sword. The Israelites had put Balaam himself to death with the sword (Josh. 13:22), and “the sword of my mouth,” Jesus said, would be a quick and fierce judgment on those who followed Balaam’s teaching.

Jesus is committed to fighting against false doctrines and practices within the church, and as His followers, we must be devoted to the same things. If the church at Pergamum would do that—repent and stand on the truth of Christ—they would receive two rewards.

- **Hidden manna:** God provided manna daily in the wilderness to feed and sustain the Israelites. Some of that manna was “hidden” in a golden pot and placed inside the ark of the covenant as a reminder of God’s provision for His people. This manna is a symbol of eternal life, and for those who trust and follow Jesus, He will provide spiritual food for us for all eternity.
- **A white stone:** At the time, white stones were given by judges to indicate that an accused person was found innocent. They were also sometimes used as a ticket, of sorts, for admission into a public event. Either way, the white rock in this passage represents an incredibly precious gift—the forgiveness of Jesus and entrance into God’s eternal kingdom.

When parents name a child, the giving of a name represents the parents’ authority over the child. On the white stones given to each of Jesus’ faithful followers was inscribed a new name, signifying both Christ’s authority over that individual and His intimate relationship with the person, much like parents’ relationship with their child. When we come to Christ, we are given a new name!

While this letter was written to the church at Pergamum, the principles apply to our churches today. We may be tempted to believe the world’s ideas, but they are contrary to the Word of God. We must refuse the lies of the world and hold closely to the truth of God’s Word. If we are deceived or compromise the truth, then we stand in danger of receiving judgment. But if we remain devoted to the truth, we will receive the blessings God promises to those who trust and obey Jesus.

### DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 23)

- 6** Why are Christians sometimes tempted to believe the lies of the world?
- 7** How does God’s Word act as a sharp, double-edged sword?
- 8** When have you seen someone refuse to compromise on biblical truth?





# LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

THE POINT // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // BIBLE

*The Bible consists of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments and is the only inspired written Word of God.*

Scripture is the inspired Word of God. It has been literally “breathed out” by the Holy Spirit and is the means by which God reveals Himself, as well as His purposes for the world and for us. Those who trust in any other sources of wisdom are guilty of the same sins as the church in Pergamum. We can know God and His will only through the Scriptures.

## > CHRIST

To follow Jesus requires that we believe every word of the Bible, trust it, and live it out in our daily lives.

**9** How are you sometimes tempted to compromise the Bible’s teachings?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

**BIBLE**

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

**10** When have you taken a stand because of your faith in Christ?



# LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // WHEN IT COMES TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.

## > COMMUNITY

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Christians are called to hold one another accountable.

**11** If you know someone who is stepping into false teaching or compromise, lovingly confront that person and urge him or her to come back to the truth of Christ. Let God use you in the life of another, but it's important to do so by "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).



## > CULTURE

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We live in a culture that demands us to be tolerant. While it is important that we recognize others' rights to think and choose for themselves, tolerance in our culture often translates as acceptance or even approval. Scripture is clear—while truly loving all people, we must stand against sin.

**12** How are you standing for truth in ways that go against culture?

**13** How will you leverage this to help others see the truth of the gospel?