

WHEN HAVE YOU IGNORED A WARNING?

Strong in Purity

The POINT ➤

Purity in all things impacts your service for Christ.

➤ REVELATION 2:18-29

¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

¹⁹ “‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you

I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’



FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Our response to God's love is to remain pure in all aspects of life—with our bodies, thoughts, attitudes, actions, and speech—and He empowers us to obey His commands as we live by the Spirit.

Message to Leaders

The culture continually tempts people with sensual sins, but Jesus has called us to purity to the point that there shouldn't be even a hint of sexual sin in our lives. We must not give in to cultural perspectives that sex outside God's design is normal or okay. It's not. We must strive every day to live in purity, trusting in the Spirit to provide the strength to walk in obedience.

› Engage Option 1

Place a large, clear jar filled with clean water up front for everyone to see. Give students objects to place in the jar that would cloud the water and make it dirty. Ask students to describe the water and explain why it isn't clean anymore. Say, **"Living for Christ means we should fill our lives with things that are pure and holy, instead of sin, so we can best fulfill our purpose of serving Him."**

› Engage Option 2

Place a large piece of glass up front with a list of sins and temptations written all over it. Say, **"Sin distracts us from God's purpose for our lives and keeps us from seeing clearly so we can serve Him with all our hearts."**

› Engage Option 3

Search the Internet for "Jackie Hill Perry on How to Resist Temptation to Sin." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"Loving Jesus will enable us to resist sin and devote ourselves to obedience to God."**

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 4: Consider using the **Love God** poster to engage students in the session. Ask students to list the things that God loves and the things that God hates. Then challenge students to consider whether their own ideas and lives align with God's.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.



Warnings come to us in a variety of forms. Some fall in the category of obvious or unnecessary. Do we really need a printed warning telling us not to use a hair dryer in the shower? Others come with a sigh of relief. And some warnings catch our attention immediately. When your mom says you better be home by 10:30 or you're going to be grounded for a month, then you make sure you're home on time.

How seriously we take such warnings can also depend on who is giving the warning. If an elderly neighbor tells you to eat your carrots or you'll go blind, you may not pay as much attention as when your doctor gives health advice. Certainly, when a warning comes from God Himself, we should sit up and take notice!

This was the experience of the church in Thyatira. They needed a course correction, and Jesus warned them what would happen if they failed to change.

THE SETTING

Previously in Revelation, the risen Jesus had addressed three letters to churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum. Now He addressed the fourth to the church in Thyatira with the longest in the series of letters. Thyatira was a bustling business and trade center in the Roman province of Asia Minor. The Lord commanded the church to deal with a festering sin problem that threatened to destroy its spiritual health.

FACT:

Urban legend has it the fastest speeding ticket ever issued was in Texas in 2003. The driver of a European sports car was doing a blistering 242 mph in a 75 mph zone.¹ I'm guessing he didn't get away with just a warning.



IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.

REVELATION 2:18-19

*“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. **REVELATION 2:18-19**”*

Thyatira was not a large city in comparison with the other cities Jesus addressed in Revelation 2–3. It was poorly defended and often overrun, but what Thyatira had going for it was its variety of merchants and manufacturing trades. It was probably best known for its purple cloth—the same purple cloth that Lydia sold (Acts 16:14)—which is still produced and sold in that area. Like the city, the church in Thyatira may have been small, but it was an active church.

Jesus addressed this church by first identifying Himself as the Son of God, emphasizing His deity. Jesus also described Himself as a warrior whose eyes were like a fiery flame and feet like fine bronze. As the Son of God, His eyes are able to pierce through any facade that people may seek to put up, seeing right to the heart of the matter. With feet like fine bronze—a term the local bronze workers would have identified with—He is able to crush any sin under His feet.

Jesus commended the church in Thyatira for four specific things they were doing right—their love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. The church’s love wasn’t just the casual expression we often use to describe our appreciation for certain foods. It was a genuine love for Jesus that moved them to live generously and sacrificially in relation to their neighbors. Love was the motivation behind their service, just as their faithful devotion to Christ was the motivation behind their endurance.

Jesus told them their current works—those things they were doing to expand the kingdom of God—were greater than the first things they did. Their love and faithfulness were growing, leading to increasing service and endurance, with all of it bringing glory to Jesus.

When we have that same kind of love for Christ these believers had, others will see it in the ways we serve Him with every aspect of our lives. We would be wise to learn from this early church concerning the ways they loved and served others. Let’s strive every day to have the kind of faith that leads us to sacrificial love and real-life service.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 30)

1 How does your church exhibit love, faithfulness, service, and endurance? How do you personally live out these qualities?

2 What are the best ways to measure spiritual growth?



IMPART

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.

REVELATION 2:20-23

*But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. **REVELATION 2:20-23***

Here was a church that was doing well in its love and faithfulness, service and endurance. In fact, they were growing in these. Yet Jesus still confronted them about issues in their lives. In spite of all their love for and faithfulness to Christ, they were tolerating immorality and idolatry in the church. Jesus identified the one behind these problems by the name Jezebel. This was likely not her real name, but a reflection of her character, because she was behaving just like the wicked Queen Jezebel in the Old Testament, who actively promoted idol worship among God's people (1 Kings 16:31).

Although the woman in Thyatira called herself a prophetess, she was not speaking for God. Non-Christians in Thyatira thought immorality and idolatry were perfectly acceptable, and this Jezebel's teaching communicated that these were okay for God's people too. Tragically, the church accepted her message—they believed they could serve God and still engage in worldly behaviors.

In His grace, Christ gave her time to repent, but Jezebel refused to do so. Therefore, His judgment was coming against her—and it would be severe. But Jesus' condemnation wasn't just against the false prophetess Jezebel. His condemnation was also against those in the church who had tolerated her teachings.

In our culture today, we're encouraged to tolerate a lot of things that go against the clear teachings of God's Word, and many churches are guilty of the same offenses against God as the church in Thyatira. Many in the church believe and live according to the world's lies about sexual immorality and idolatry. Many churches teach that material wealth is a sign of God's blessing, leading their people to chase after riches. Many have tolerated the teachings of the world, leading their neighbors into deception.

When God's judgment comes against such sins—and it will—it sends a clear message to the other churches. We belong to God, and because He is just, He will judge our hearts and minds—our thoughts and desires. God knows everything we think and sees everything we do, and we will receive reward or condemnation based on what He sees.

As followers of Jesus, we must not allow immorality or idolatry anywhere near the church. Let's make sure that, in us, God sees hearts that desire Jesus above all else and minds committed to following Him.

We belong to God, and because He is just, He will judge our hearts and minds—our thoughts and desires. #BSFLtheChurch



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 31)

- 3** What are some characteristics of a person who lives a pure life?
- 4** How do we model purity in a culture that celebrates sexual impurity?
- 5** How should believers respond to immorality in the church?



REVELATION 2:24-29

But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ **REVELATION 2:24-29**

Cults and mystery religions were common in the first century. People often received a promise that if they joined, they would gain deep secrets or special wisdom. The irony was that Jezebel claimed to be a prophetess with word from God, but all she offered was lies from the devil. The special knowledge for those willing to buy in was nothing more than the so-called secrets of Satan.

Thankfully, not everyone in Thyatira had been deceived by Jezebel or captivated by her evil secrets. To these faithful believers, Jesus gave them one charge: “Only hold on to what you have until I come.” Jesus told the believers at Thyatira to hold on to the truth, refusing to give in to Satan’s deception. It wasn’t just a command for that day or the next week. They were to cling to the truth until He would come again. In the church today, we must adhere to that same message. We are to hold on to the truth regardless of popular opinion or cultural values, remaining faithful until the day Jesus calls us home to heaven.

How do we avoid being deceived by Jezebel? We must first know God’s Word. We must continually spend time reading the Scriptures and learning how it applies to our lives. We must then choose every day to live according to what God reveals. The best way to discern a lie is to thoroughly know the truth—when something doesn’t line up, we know to reject it.

To the church in Thyatira, Jesus promised two things to those who would hold on to the truth in Christ.

- **Authority over the nations:** Jesus has all authority over the nations (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-11), and He will share this rule with those who persevere and overcome (Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:2).
- **The morning star:** After the moon, Venus is the brightest object in the sky and is often called the morning star. The true morning star is Jesus (Rev. 22:16). In the darkness, He is the morning star that signifies the coming of a new day. In promising to give us the morning star, He is promising Himself—there’s nothing we need more than Jesus!

This is a message our world needs to hear. We live in a world of darkness and lies, but Jesus is the truth and the morning star who shines in the darkness. When we hold to the truth, remaining faithful to Jesus, He will use us to reveal the truth to those who have been deceived.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 31)

- 6** What are some ways your church is like the church at Thyatira?
- 7** What has helped you remain faithful in a culture that tolerates immorality and idolatry?
- 8** How can you encourage faithfulness and purity in others?



LIVE IT OUT (10 minutes)

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.



GOD
JESUS
HOLY SPIRIT
BIBLE
SALVATION
CREATION
CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY
COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Our response to God's love is to remain pure in all aspects of life—with our bodies, thoughts, attitudes, actions, and speech—and He empowers us to obey His commands as we live by the Spirit.

The culture continually tempts people with sensual sins, but Jesus has called us to purity to the point that there shouldn't be even a hint of sexual sin in our lives. We must not give in to cultural perspectives that sex outside God's design is normal or okay. It's not. We must strive every day to live in purity, trusting in the Spirit to provide the strength to walk in obedience.

>CHRIST

Jesus came to earth and lived a perfectly righteous life. We are called to follow Jesus in the ways He lived, and this involves our living in complete purity.

9 In what ways do you struggle with impurity?

10 What changes will you commit to making in order to live in purity before God and others?

Pray every day this week that the Spirit will provide the strength necessary to walk in purity.



LIVE IT OUT

THE POINT // PURITY IN ALL THINGS IMPACTS YOUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST.

> COMMUNITY

Accountability is incredibly important to living in purity.

11 Share with a trusted friend ways you are tempted to compromise on issues of purity. Ask them to pray for you every day and to check in with you regularly. Commit to sharing honestly.

12 Offer to provide this same kind of encouragement, support, and accountability for a friend. Remember to keep sensitive information they might share confidential—trust is incredibly important.



Commit to following through with this type of relationship, not only this week, but into the future.

> CULTURE

13 Make a list of things the world says are perfectly okay, but about which the Bible has something different to say. Dig into Scripture and find verses that address these issues.

14 Share with a non-believing friend why you believe what you believe about one or more of these issues. Help them to see the benefits of pure living as compared with the deceitfulness of sin.