

The Book of Revelation, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 3: Letters to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

Revelation 2:18–3:22

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally this lesson confronts two deadly self-deceptions and one quiet faithfulness. Christ presents Himself as the One who searches mind and heart and repays each according to works (2:23), which dismantles any notion that profession, reputation, or past experience secures a person apart from present obedience. Sardis has a living reputation and a dead reality. Laodicea is rich in its own eyes and bankrupt in Christ's. Against the doctrine of once saved, always saved, Christ warns plainly that a name already written in the book of life can be blotted out (3:5), and that the conqueror, not the coaster, keeps his name there. Keep the whole study within the symbolic, amillennial frame: these are seven real first-century churches, and the open door, the white garments, the book of life, and the crown are the spiritual realities of the church living between Christ's two comings, not coded predictions of modern events.

But this lesson aims past the head and at the heart. The terrifying thing about Sardis and Laodicea is that they did not know they were in trouble. The teacher's task is to hold up Christ's flaming-eyed diagnosis as a mirror until each student stops grading himself on reputation and comfort and asks what the Lord actually sees. Lukewarmness is not a doctrine to refute so much as a condition to repent of. Press the students gently toward the door at which Christ is still knocking (3:20), and toward Philadelphia, which had little power and great faithfulness, so that no one leaves merely informed about four ancient churches but is stirred to wake up, hold fast, and open the door.

Question 1

Student Question:

Christ introduces Himself to Thyatira as the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and declares, I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works (2:18, 2:23). What does it mean that the risen Christ judges each person according to works rather than reputation or intention, and how does that truth confront any idea that a believer is secure regardless of how he lives?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Christ identifies Himself to Thyatira as the Son of God with eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze (2:18), drawing on the vision of 1:14-15. This is the only place in Revelation He uses the title Son of God, and He uses it to a church tempted to compromise with idolatry. The eyes of flame mean nothing is hidden from Him. He sees past the guild dinners and the comfortable rationalizations into the heart itself.

The decisive claim is in 2:23: I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. This is a quotation of language the Old Testament reserves for God alone (Jeremiah 17:10; Psalm 7:9), now spoken by the risen Christ. He claims divine omniscience and the divine office of Judge. Judgment according to works runs straight through the New Testament (Romans 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-13; 22:12). This is not salvation earned by merit; it is the consistent teaching that a living faith shows itself in obedience and that Christ judges the reality, not the label.

For a Church of Christ congregation this answers the error that a believer is eternally secure regardless of how he lives. Christ does not ask Thyatira what it professes; He weighs what it does and tolerates. The same Lord who searches mind and heart is the Lord we will all stand before. That is both sobering and clarifying. It means reputation cannot save us and secret sin cannot hide, but it also means our quiet, unseen faithfulness is never overlooked.

Help the class feel the pastoral edge: eyes of flame are frightening to the self-deceived and comforting to the faithful. The same searching gaze that exposes Jezebel's compromise also sees the believer who quietly holds the line when no one is watching. We are not judged by the crowd's opinion or our own press releases, but by the One who reads the heart and rewards according to works.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Christ claims divine omniscience by searching mind and heart, a prerogative of God alone (Jeremiah 17:10), affirming His full deity.
- Judgment according to works is consistent New Testament teaching (Romans 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10), not salvation by merit but the necessary fruit of living faith.
- Reputation and profession cannot substitute for obedience; Christ weighs the reality of a life.
- This text stands against once saved, always saved by making each person answerable for his works to the Judge who sees all.
- The same searching gaze that exposes the compromiser comforts the faithful whose unseen obedience is never missed.

Discussion Prompts

- If Christ's eyes of flame could read the heart of this class right now, what would He see that our reputations conceal?
- How is judgment according to works different from salvation by earning, and why does the difference matter?
- What does it change about your daily choices to know the Judge already sees everything, including the hidden things?

Question 2

Student Question:

Thyatira was guilty not of teaching Jezebel's doctrine themselves but of tolerating it (2:20). Where in your own life or in the life of the church are you tempted to call a tolerance of compromise loving, when Christ would call it unfaithful?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Thyatira's commended works are real: love, faith, service, patient endurance, and growth (2:19). This was not a lazy church. Yet Christ has this against them: they tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and seduces His servants to sexual immorality and to eating food sacrificed to idols (2:20). The sin named is tolerance. They did not necessarily follow her, but they made room for her.

The name Jezebel recalls the queen of 1 Kings 16-21 who led Israel into Baal worship and immorality. In a guild-driven city like Thyatira, refusing the idol feasts could cost a tradesman his livelihood, so Jezebel's teaching that such compromise was harmless would have been welcome. Tolerating her felt like grace, like breadth, like not being narrow. Christ calls it unfaithfulness.

This is where the question presses into the student. We live in a culture that prizes tolerance as the highest virtue, and there is a true Christian patience that bears with the weak. But there is also a counterfeit tolerance that simply refuses to confront sin because confrontation is costly or unpopular. The line falls between bearing with people and endorsing what destroys them.

Lead the class to be concrete and personal rather than abstract. Where do we excuse compromise in our own homes, finances, entertainment, or speech, and call it being loving or open-minded? Christ gave Jezebel time to repent and she would not (2:21). His patience is real, but it is not endless, and a church that confuses tolerating sin with loving sinners is in danger.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Tolerating false teaching and immorality, not only practicing it, is itself a sin Christ judges (2:20).
- There is a true Christian patience and a false tolerance; the difference is whether sin is finally confronted and repented of.
- Christ's patience is genuine but not unlimited; He gave Jezebel time to repent (2:21).
- Sexual immorality and idolatry are not negotiable cultural preferences but matters Christ takes with deadly seriousness.
- Love for people requires the courage to name what destroys them, not silence dressed up as kindness.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do we call something loving or open-minded when Christ would call it tolerating compromise?
- How can we tell the difference between patiently bearing with a weak brother and endorsing his sin?
- What compromise have you been quietly making room for that this letter exposes?

Question 3

Student Question:

To Sardis Christ says, you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead (3:1), and He commands them to wake up and strengthen what remains. How does a church or a Christian come to have a living reputation and a dead reality, and what is the difference between activity and actual life in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Christ comes to Sardis as the One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars (3:1), the One in full possession of the Spirit and the churches. Then comes the verdict that must have stunned them: you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Sardis had a name, a brand, a buzz. Other churches probably admired it. Christ pronounces it a corpse.

The city of Sardis itself had a history of false security; its acropolis was thought unconquerable and twice fell because the watchmen slept. The church mirrored its city. There is no mention of persecution, no Jezebel, no heresy named. The problem is subtler and in some ways deadlier: a church busy and respected and spiritually dead. Christ says, I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God (3:2). The activity was there; the life was not.

This exposes the gap between activity and life in Christ. A congregation can have programs, attendance, reputation, and history, and yet be a museum rather than a body. The same is true of an individual who keeps up the forms of religion long after the heart has gone cold. Reputation lives on momentum after life has departed, like a star whose light still reaches us long after it has burned out.

The remedy Christ commands is not more activity but resurrection: wake up, strengthen what remains, remember, keep, and repent (3:2-3). Help the class see that the cure for dead religion is never simply trying harder at the same forms. It is returning to the living Christ Himself, the One who alone gives life, before the light of reputation finally goes dark.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- A reputation for spiritual life is not the same as spiritual life; Christ judges the reality (3:1).
- Christ holds the seven spirits and seven stars, fully possessing the Spirit and sovereign over the churches.
- Religious activity can continue long after spiritual life has departed; busyness is not faithfulness.
- The cure for dead religion is repentance and return to the living Christ, not merely more programs.
- Even a dead church is summoned to wake; Christ's command implies the possibility of revival through repentance.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between a church that is busy and a church that is alive?
- How can a person keep all the outward forms of faith and still be spiritually dead?
- If your private walk with Christ were judged by its life rather than its reputation, what would the verdict be?

Question 4

Student Question:

Sardis is told to wake up, remember what you received and heard, keep it, and repent (3:2-3). What in your own walk with Christ have you received and heard but allowed to grow faint, and what would waking up specifically look like this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Christ gives Sardis five sharp imperatives: wake up, strengthen, remember, keep, repent (3:2-3). Notice the word remember. The cure begins by recalling what you received and heard. Sardis was not commanded to discover something new but to return to the gospel it already had and had let slip.

This is the pattern of repentance throughout Scripture. Israel was constantly called to remember; the prodigal came to himself and remembered his father's house; here a drowsy church is told to remember and keep what it once received. Spiritual decline is rarely a dramatic apostasy. More often it is a slow falling asleep, a quiet letting go of things once held with both hands.

Press the students to be specific. What did you once receive and hear with joy, daily prayer, the hunger to gather, a tender conscience, a love for the lost, that has grown faint? The honest answer is usually not far away. Sardis did not need a new revelation; it needed to wake up to the one it had let grow cold.

Then move from diagnosis to action. Waking up is a decision with hands and feet: a Bible reopened, a habit restored, a sin confessed, a relationship reconciled. Christ adds a warning, if you will not wake up, I will come like a thief (3:3). The student should leave this question able to name one concrete thing waking up will look like before the week is out.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Repentance often means returning to what was already received rather than seeking something new (3:3).
- Spiritual decline is usually gradual, a falling asleep, not a single dramatic collapse.
- Christ's warning to come like a thief presses the urgency of waking now (3:3).
- Remembering the gospel once heard is the root from which renewed obedience grows.
- True waking up shows itself in concrete restored practices, not merely renewed feelings.

Discussion Prompts

- What did you once hold with joy in your walk with Christ that has grown faint?
- Why does Christ tell a sleepy church to remember rather than to find something new?
- Name one concrete thing waking up will look like for you this week.

Question 5

Student Question:

In Sardis a few people had not soiled their garments, and Christ promises the conqueror will be clothed in white and never have his name blotted out of the book of life (3:4-5). Since a name can be blotted out, what does this say about the popular teaching that a saved person can never be lost, and how should that shape our endurance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Even in dead Sardis there were a few who had not soiled their garments (3:4). Christ knows the faithful remnant by name even inside a corpse of a congregation. To these and to every conqueror He makes a threefold promise: they will walk with Him in white, they will be clothed in white garments, and He will never blot their name out of the book of life (3:4-5). White garments are the purity and righteousness of those washed in the Lamb's blood (7:14; 19:8).

The crucial phrase for doctrine is, I will never blot his name out of the book of life. The promise that the conqueror's name stays in the book carries a plain and sobering implication: a name can be blotted out. You do not promise to keep what could never be lost. Scripture elsewhere speaks the same way of being blotted from the book (Exodus 32:33; Psalm 69:28) and warns Christians that they can fall (Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

This stands squarely against the popular doctrine of once saved, always saved. The book of life is real, names are written in it, and Christ guarantees the name of the one who conquers, that is, the one who endures faithfully to the end (2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26; 21:7). The guarantee is precious precisely because it is conditioned on conquering, not on a past decision divorced from present faithfulness.

Handle this pastorally as well as doctrinally. The point is not to make Christians anxious about losing salvation at every misstep, for Christ is faithful and His blood cleanses. The point is to take seriously that we are summoned to endure, to keep our garments unsoiled, and to overcome. Security in Christ is real, but it belongs to those who hold their confidence firm to the end (Hebrews 3:14), not to those who presume on grace while walking away from Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- A name written in the book of life can be blotted out; Christ's promise to keep the conqueror's name implies the real danger of losing it (3:5).
- This refutes once saved, always saved; perseverance is required, not optional (Hebrews 3:14).
- White garments picture the righteousness of those washed in the Lamb's blood (7:14; 19:8).

- Christ knows the faithful remnant by name even within a dead church.
- The promise of security is genuine but conditioned on conquering, on faithful endurance to the end.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the promise never to blot out a name imply that names can be blotted out?
- How does conditional security differ from both careless presumption and anxious fear?
- What does keeping your garments unsoiled look like in a world that pressures you to compromise?

Question 6

Student Question:

Philadelphia had but little power, yet had kept Christ's word and not denied His name (3:8). When you feel that your faithfulness amounts to very little, how does Christ's commendation of a small, weak, faithful church reframe what He actually values in you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Philadelphia is one of only two churches Christ rebukes for nothing at all. Its commendation is striking precisely because of how modest it sounds: I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name (3:8). Little power, but kept the word. Small strength, but faithful. This is the church the world would overlook and Christ delights in.

Notice what Christ values. He does not commend Philadelphia for size, influence, wealth, or reputation, the very things Laodicea trusted and Sardis enjoyed. He commends faithfulness under weakness. They held onto His word and refused to deny His name even when, it seems, they had little clout to make a stir in their city.

This reframes how we measure our own usefulness to Christ. Many believers feel their faithfulness amounts to very little, an ordinary life, a small influence, a quiet obedience no one notices. Philadelphia tells us that Christ counts kept word and undenied name as great, regardless of how little power stands behind them. The widow's two coins and the cup of cold water belong to the same economy.

Encourage the discouraged in your class with this. The question is not how much power you have but whether, with the little you have, you keep His word and refuse to deny His name. To that kind of small, faithful Christian, Christ opens doors and promises to make even opponents acknowledge that He has loved them (3:9).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Christ values faithfulness under weakness over size, influence, or reputation (3:8).
- Keeping His word and not denying His name is the heart of what He commends.
- Felt smallness is no disqualification; God works through the weak (1 Corinthians 1:27).

- Christ notices and treasures quiet, unseen obedience the world overlooks.
- Faithfulness with little is rewarded with open doors and Christ's vindicating love (3:9).

Discussion Prompts

- When you feel your faithfulness is too small to matter, what does Philadelphia say to you?
- Why might little power actually keep a church closer to Christ than great strength?
- What does keeping His word and not denying His name cost you in your own setting?

Question 7

Student Question:

To Philadelphia the One who is holy and true, who has the key of David, says, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut (3:7-8), and He promises to keep them through the hour of trial. What is this open door, and what does it mean that Christ's sovereign protection rests not on the church's strength but on His own?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Christ comes to Philadelphia as the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens (3:7). The key of David draws on Isaiah 22:22, the authority to admit or exclude from the king's house. Christ holds that authority absolutely. He then says, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut (3:8).

Within the symbolic frame of Revelation this open door is best understood as Christ's gift of access and opportunity to His faithful church: an open door of entrance into His kingdom and salvation, and very likely an open door for gospel witness that no human opposition can close (compare 1 Corinthians 16:9; Colossians 4:3). The point is not a coded prediction of a future event but the present reality that the church's standing and mission rest in the hands of the sovereign Christ.

He then promises, because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world (3:10). Read symbolically and amillennially, this is not the foundation for a secret rapture escaping a literal seven-year tribulation. It is Christ's pledge to guard His faithful people through the seasons of testing that fall on the world between His comings, the same promise of preservation given to all the conquerors. He keeps His own.

The pastoral weight is enormous. The open door no one can shut and the keeping through trial rest not on the church's little power but on Christ's absolute authority. A small, weak congregation is utterly secure, not because of what it can hold but because of who holds it. Help the class rest their confidence where Philadelphia's rested, on the One with the key, not on their own strength.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ holds the key of David, absolute authority to admit and exclude from the kingdom (3:7; Isaiah 22:22).
- The open door signifies access to salvation and opportunity for witness that no opposition can close.
- Kept from the hour of trial is Christ preserving His faithful through testing, not a secret rapture from a literal tribulation; read symbolically and amillennially.
- The church's security rests on Christ's power, not its own strength (3:8).
- What Christ opens cannot be shut; His sovereignty guarantees His people's standing and mission.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the open door Christ sets before a faithful church, and who can shut it?
- How does resting in Christ's authority rather than our own strength change the way we face opposition?
- Why does reading kept from the hour of trial symbolically protect us from rapture speculation?

Question 8

Student Question:

Laodicea said, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not knowing it was wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (3:17). Where are you most tempted to measure your spiritual condition by comfort, security, or success, and what would Christ's diagnosis of you reveal that your own self-assessment hides?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Laodicea was a wealthy banking and trade city, famous for its money, its black wool, and a medical school known for an eye salve. The church absorbed its city's self-image: I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing (3:17). It was comfortable, successful, and quietly convinced it had arrived. And it had no idea that Christ saw it as wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Christ answers their boast point for point. You think you are rich; buy from me gold refined by fire. You boast of your wool industry; I will give you white garments to cover your nakedness. You sell eye salve; anoint your eyes with my salve that you may see (3:18). Their very sources of pride were the measures of their poverty. The danger of comfort is that it anesthetizes us to our true condition.

This is the most searching question in the lesson for a prosperous, comfortable people. We are tempted, like Laodicea, to read full bank accounts, stable lives, and outward success as evidence of God's favor and our own spiritual health. Christ severs that link. Material comfort tells us nothing about the state of the soul, and it can actively blind us to need by making us feel we lack nothing.

Lead the class to let Christ's diagnosis override their self-assessment. The Laodiceans were sincere; they truly believed they were rich. Self-deception always feels like accuracy from the inside. The remedy is to stop trusting our own verdict and to ask the One with eyes like flame what He sees, then to come to Him for the only true gold, garments, and sight there are.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Material comfort and success are no measure of spiritual health and can blind us to our true need (3:17).
- Self-deception feels like accuracy from the inside; the Laodiceans sincerely believed they were rich.
- Christ alone supplies true wealth, covering, and sight; we must buy from Him (3:18).
- Prosperity is not proof of God's favor, and the prosperity gospel misreads this passage.
- The remedy is to trust Christ's diagnosis over our own self-assessment.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to read comfort or success as evidence of spiritual health?
- Why is self-deceived prosperity more dangerous than open struggle?
- What would Christ's eye salve show you that your own self-assessment hides?

Question 9

Student Question:

Christ says of Laodicea, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth (3:16), yet to the same church He says, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline (3:19) and stands at the door and knocks (3:20). Bring these together with Thyatira's judgment according to works and Sardis's blotted-out names: what does this whole passage teach about self-deceived, lukewarm, dead religion versus living faithfulness, about judgment according to works, and about a book of life from which a name can be removed?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson, and it draws all four letters together. Christ's most famous rebuke falls on Laodicea: because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth (3:16). The hot springs of nearby Hierapolis healed, and the cold waters of Colossae refreshed, but Laodicea's water arrived lukewarm and nauseating. Lukewarm faith is not half-hearted devotion that Christ tolerates; it is the self-satisfied, comfortable, useless religion that makes Him gag. It is worse in one sense than open coldness, because the lukewarm person feels no need to change.

Set this beside the other three letters and a single picture emerges. Thyatira tolerated compromise and was told Christ repays each according to works (2:23). Sardis had a living reputation and a dead reality (3:1). Laodicea was rich in its own eyes and bankrupt in Christ's (3:17). The common thread is self-deception: religion that looks fine to itself and is condemned

by the Lord who searches the heart. Against all of it stands Philadelphia, small and weak and genuinely faithful. Christ does not weigh our self-assessment; He weighs the reality of a life lived in living obedience to Him.

On judgment according to works, this passage joins the consistent New Testament witness that Christ will render to each one according to what he has done (2:23; Romans 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12). This is not salvation earned by merit, which the gospel of grace excludes (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is the truth that saving faith is a living, obedient, persevering faith, and that a faith producing only lukewarm self-satisfaction is not the faith that saves. We are saved by grace through a faith that works (Galatians 5:6; James 2:17).

On the book of life, recall 3:5: the conqueror will never have his name blotted out. The promise to keep the conqueror's name implies that a name can be removed, which is fatal to once saved, always saved. The whole passage portrays the book of life as real and the believer's place in it as secured by faithful endurance, not by a past decision divorced from present obedience (Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:26-31). Christians are warned, lovingly but seriously, that they can be lost.

Yet hold the severity and the mercy together, for the same letter does both. To the lukewarm church Christ says, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline (3:19); His harsh words are the surgery of love, not the verdict of an enemy. And then the tender image that ends it all: behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me (3:20). The Lord who threatens to spit out the lukewarm is the very Lord standing outside the locked door, knocking, waiting to be let in. Lead the class to the door. The remedy for lukewarm, dead, self-deceived religion is not despair but to hear His voice, repent, and open the door to the living Christ who still seeks fellowship with His own.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Lukewarmness is self-satisfied, comfortable, useless religion that Christ finds nauseating, worse in one sense than open coldness because it feels no need to repent (3:16).
- Self-deceived religion runs through Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea; Christ judges the reality of a life, not its self-assessment.
- Judgment according to works is consistent New Testament teaching (2:23; Romans 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10), affirming that saving faith is a living, obedient faith, not salvation by merit (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:17).
- A name can be blotted out of the book of life; the promise to keep the conqueror's name refutes once saved, always saved (3:5; Hebrews 10:26-31).
- Christ's rebuke is the discipline of love, not rejection; whom He loves He reproves (3:19).
- Christ stands at the door and knocks; the remedy for dead religion is to hear His voice, repent, and open to Him (3:20).

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Christ find lukewarmness more revolting than open coldness, and where does that expose us?

- How do judgment according to works and the conditional book of life together overturn once saved, always saved?
- Christ is still knocking at the lukewarm church's door. What does it mean for you, today, to hear His voice and open it?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across all four letters, the searching eyes of Christ, the call to wake up, the open door, the knock at the locked heart, name one specific way the risen Lord is using this passage to form you, to expose a self-deception, rekindle a faithfulness, or open a door you have been keeping shut.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question gathers all four letters and turns them on the student personally. The thread running through Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea is that Christ sees what we cannot see in ourselves, and He speaks the truth because He loves us. The flame in His eyes is the searching kindness of a Lord who refuses to let us deceive ourselves into ruin.

Resist letting the class end in mere information about four ancient cities. The whole point of these letters, repeated seven times, is the refrain, he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The word the churches, plural, means every letter is addressed to every church, including this one. Each student is meant to find himself somewhere in these four mirrors.

Invite genuine self-examination. Has the searching eye of Christ exposed a tolerated compromise like Thyatira, a dead reputation like Sardis, a comfortable lukewarmness like Laodicea, or has it called you, like Philadelphia, to keep faithful with the little you have? The goal is one specific, nameable response, not a vague resolution to do better.

End at the door. Christ is still knocking (3:20). Close the lesson by asking each student to name the one thing the risen Lord is doing in them through this passage, a self-deception to confess, a faithfulness to rekindle, or a door long held shut that He is asking them to open, and then to actually do it this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues
- Every letter is addressed to every church; the repeated call to hear includes us (the churches, plural).
- Self-examination before the searching Christ is the proper response to all four letters (2 Corinthians 13:5).
- Transformation, not mere information, is the aim; one specific, nameable response is the goal.

- Christ's knock means the door of repentance and fellowship stands open to every condition (3:20).
- Faithful endurance is the consistent call across all seven letters, sealed by the promise to the one who conquers.

Discussion Prompts

- Which of the four mirrors, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, or Laodicea, showed you your own face today?
- What is the one specific thing Christ is asking you to do in response to this passage?
- Christ is knocking. What door have you been keeping shut, and will you open it this week?