

Lukewarm Christianity

Revelation 3:14–22 (NKJV)

14“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

21To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

- *In Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, Christ addresses seven churches. Each church addressed can represent one of the church ages and the letter to the last of the seven churches best describes the spiritual condition of much of the Western church in these last times.*
- *As we study what Christ wrote to the Laodicean church, we can learn what some of the major areas are that we must overcome and how to overcome them.*
- *“the church of the Laodiceans” – The Greek word “Laodiceans” comes from two Greek words; λαός (laos) meaning “people” and δίκη (dikē) meaning “opinion, decision, custom, rule, justice” therefore the Laodicea can mean, “the opinion of the people, the decision of the people, the rule of the people, the rights of the people.”*

- *Thus the Laodicean church centers on the desires and opinions of the people.*
- *The Laodicean church is focused on what the people want.*

2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NKJV)

³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- *The reasons they will not endure sound doctrine is because they will seek doctrine that will conform to their own desires, they will turn away from the truth, and turn to fables.*
- *Paul warns that the time will come when people will cherry pick through the Scriptures to develop doctrine that will justify their selfish choices, their sinful actions and self-centered lifestyle. This describes the Laodicean church.*

14“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

- *Christ begins each of the letters to the seven churches by revealing attributes about Himself that are essential for that church.*
- *To the church of Laodicea, who are being defeated by lukewarmness, the three attributes of Christ are: the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.*
- *Jesus Christ is the Amen.*
- *Amen is a transliteration from the Hebrew and is used in almost every language and is said to be the best-known word universally. It means, “truth, trustworthy, surely, so be it, may it be fulfilled,” and it was spoken as a sign of agreement with what had just been said or prayed.*

- *For Christ to be the Amen in our lives we need to be willing to come into full agreement with His will for our lives.*
- *Many believers withhold certain parts of their lives or aspirations from Jesus Christ and this is a type of lukewarmness.*
- *Believers sometimes withhold being fully in agreement with the Lord, because they don't believe that His plans for their lives are the most glorious and the most wonderful.*
- *The first step to overcoming lukewarmness is to say "Amen" to Jesus and come into agreement with His will and purposes for our lives.*
- *Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness.*
- *Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6) and we must submit to the truth of His Word.*
- *We must be openhearted and accept the truth of God's Word and not try ignore some Scriptures or to twist other Scriptures to suit our own personal preferences, because "no prophesy of Scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20).*
- *The second step to overcome lukewarmness is to accept that truth is not subjective and based on our own personal preference. It is based on the Word of God.*
- *Jesus Christ is the Beginning of the creation of God.*

Colossians 1:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

- *Jesus Christ created all things whether they are visible or invisible, whether they are spiritual or physical, whether they are kingdoms or powers, everything was created through Him and for Him.*
- *All of creation is to exalt Jesus Christ and when we are lukewarm “the mantra” of our lives is “It’s all about me” and “I am always on my mind” and we sing, “I am the potter and He is the clay.”*
- *When we are lukewarm we always try to get our own way and try to get God to bless the things that we want to do, instead of seeking God’s will and be willing to do things His way.*
- *Lukewarmness is about getting the glory for ourselves instead of giving the glory to God.*
- *The third way for us to overcome lukewarmness is to fully embrace the preeminence of Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives, so the purpose of our lives is to give all the glory to Him.*
- *These three aspects of Jesus Christ are meant to stir our three directive facilities of will, intellect, and emotions, to break free from lukewarmness and experience a life filled with victory, joy, and purpose.*
- *Jesus Christ as the Amen brings wholeness to our will, so we choose to come into full agreement with Him and say “Amen” to all the will of God.*
- *Jesus Christ as the Faithful and True Witness brings soundness to our intellect, so that we are no longer double minded about truth, but can clearly know the truth and live our lives accordingly.*
- *Jesus Christ as the Beginning of the creation of God brings wholeness to our emotions, so our hearts are filled with a love for the One who created and redeemed us.*

15“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.
16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- *“I know you works” – Jesus knows our lives and the type of fruit that our lives are producing. We can fool others by our outward action, but we can’t hide from the eyes of God.*
- *“By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:16) – What kind of fruit are we producing in our lives?*
- *“because you are lukewarm I will vomit you out of My mouth.” – This warning is pretty severe, but what does it actually mean and what are the implications?*
- *For us to understand what this warning really means we need to understand the context.*

19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

- *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten”- the motivation of the Lord is love and not hatred and His desire is to see positive changes.*
- *Even believers can get a wrong image of God when they read the warnings and rebukes that He has for His people if they do not read it in the context of His love.*

20Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- *Many preachers have used verse 20 in the context of evangelism when calling sinners to open their hearts to Christ and receive Him as their Lord and Saviour. However, this verse is not directed towards unbelievers, since this letter was written specifically to the church in Laodicea.*
- **“If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” - The theme of verse 20 is not salvation but fellowship.**
- *The picture painted by verse 20 shows Jesus standing at the door of our hearts, knocking, and waiting. He is waiting for us to respond, so that He can enter in and have a meal with us.*

- *The theme is not about salvation but fellowship.*
- *A lukewarm Christian does not delight in having fellowship with the Lord, but is busy occupying himself with the distractions of this life.*
- *The beautiful picture of fellowship is seen as Christ sits down to have a meal with us.*
- *Jesus is not saying, “Open the door, we need to talk,” but simply, “Let’s sit down and enjoy some time together.”*
- *What does sharing a meal with Jesus look like?*
- *When we spend time giving thanks and praise to Him we are banqueting our Friend.*
- *When we are attentive to His voice and spend time thinking about how much He loves us and is faithful to us He is banqueting us.*
- *When we pray we are speaking to God.*
- *When we read the Bible God is speaking to us.*
- *This is not strictly true since many times in prayer God can speak to us through vision or prophetic word, or simply by placing a thought in our hearts, but it does provide an outline as to how to dine with the Lord.*
- *Sometimes believers have turned their quiet time with the Lord into something that resembles religious rituals instead of enjoying sharing our hearts with Him.*
- *“If anyone hears My voice and opens the door” – Lukewarm Christians are so filled with distractions they are not aware that Jesus is knocking and waiting for them to respond.*
- *Lukewarmness is also reflected in the fact that the person would rather do other things rather than pray and spend time reading the Bible or in knowing what God thinks.*

- *The key for any relationship to develop requires both parties to spend enough time together so that they each know what the other is thinking and desiring.*

21To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- *Verse 21 reinforces that the theme is not about eternal salvation, justification, but about our sanctification and the quality of our relationship with Christ now and in Heaven.*
- *The wonderful grace of God is seen in that although He is addressing lukewarm believers He is offering them the most wonderful reward, “to be seated with Me on My throne for eternity.”*
- *Jesus is saying, “If you overcome your selfishness and learn to put our relationship first we are going to be such good friends that when you get to Heaven I am going to invite you to sit right next to Me on My throne.*

15“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

- *It is interesting that Jesus says that He would rather have believers cold than lukewarm!*
- *Lukewarm Christians bring greater shame to Christ than even cold Christians because they purport to be living a life of faith in Christ, while in actual fact they are living a selfish life in the flesh with a religious façade.*

16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- *Since we have studied the context of this warning we see the context is about fellowship and what Jesus is saying is that when we are lukewarm it gives Jesus no pleasure or refreshing.*
- *The Lord rejects this type of fellowship and He spews us out of His mouth when we are lukewarm.*

- *Lukewarmness is a lack of conviction or enthusiasm, half hearted.*

17Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

- “Because you say, ‘I am rich and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked’” – *One of the characteristics of a lukewarm Christian is that they don’t recognise that they are lukewarm!*
- *Lukewarm Christians think they are not only fine, but rich and wealthy, and need nothing. That is why this type of lukewarmness is incubated in a culture where the focus is on material success.*

18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

- *Christ has counsel for us to be able to shake off this spiritual slumber of lukewarmness.*

“I counsel to buy from Me ...” – *Our justification cost us nothing, but it cost Jesus Christ everything, and our sanctification will cost us everything.*

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

24Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Matthew 10:38 (NKJV)

38And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

1 Peter 1:6–7 (NKJV)

6In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

7that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

- **“gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich” - This can speak about our faith being refined and purified for the glory of God.**
- **A lukewarm Christian will do whatever he can to avoid trials and hardships even if it means compromising his integrity, conviction, and faith in Christ.**
- **However, it is through various trials that our faith is purified like gold, but the cost is our willingness to patiently to endure hardship and temptations.**
- **Richard Wurmbbrand once said there are only two types of Christians that he has encountered that have true joy. Those in the Bible and those that suffer persecution for the sake of Christ.**
- **What kind of persecution do Christians in free countries experience?**
- **The persecution from our flesh as our old sinful selfish man wants to indulge in sin.**
- **The way a Christian can end the persecution is by giving into the temptation and immediately it stops, but in the process He has denied Christ by serving the flesh.**

Revelation 19:8 (NKJV)

⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

- **“white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed” - This can speak about our actions and how we live our lives.**
- **The cost to be clothed in white garments is the willingness to live consecrated lives.**
- **The standard we are to follow is the one that the Word of God teaches and the way we live that standard is by abiding in Jesus Christ and having His Words abiding in us.**
- **“that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed” – As we live lives according to God’s Word we have a sure hope that we will not be disappointed in the day we stand before God, for we will hear the words, “Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”**

Philippians 1:21 (NKJV)

²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- *This is the principle to live by if we want to be free from lukewarmness and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*
- *“anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” – The pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8).*
- *The anointing of the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to the wonderful things of God.*
- *When we give no room in our hearts for secret sin or unforgiveness then we will be able to see the goodness of God everywhere we look and as a result our love for Christ will blossom.*

John 14:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments.

1 John 5:3 (NKJV)

³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

- *If we find God’s commandments or standard heavy or burdensome, we need to awaken our first love and shake off the slumber of lukewarmness.*
- *Repentance is not a stationary event, but a journey toward all the purposes and blessings of God.*
- *To serve God out of a sense of compulsion really reveals a lack of appreciation and understanding for all that Christ has done for us.*

22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

- *“He who has an ear, let him hear” - This saying is repeated as Jesus addresses each of the seven churches in Revelation.*
- *Many times we may think we are hearing but in reality we may not be hearing.*
- *If we are truly hearing we will respond to the message that the Lord is giving us.*

