

LESSONS FROM THE SEVEN CHURCHES!

THE LITERAL CITY & CHURCH	A LESSON FROM EACH CHURCH!	THE CALL TO HEAR GOD!
(Revelation 2:1a ESV) “To the angel of the church in <u>EPHESUS</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST LOVE GOD FIRST AND FOREMOST. Ephesus was an impressive church in danger of losing their true gospel witness. No matter how impressive or biblical a church may outwardly appear, and the Ephesus church certainly appeared to be both impressive and biblical, a church is not pleasing to God if it has lost its highest priority. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 2:8a ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>SMYRNA</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST INTERPRET OUR LIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF ETERNITY. The church at Smyrna suffered ... a lot. Christ knows what we are going through. Nothing escapes his notice. He urges us to interpret our lives in the context of eternity within his eternal plan and purpose as he prepares our hearts for faithful service to him. This perspective of trust in the sovereignty of God frees us to understand and receive the events of our lives through the truth of God and his word. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 2:12a ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>PERGAMUM</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST NOT TOLERATE FALSE TEACHING. Live by the sword or die by the sword. False teaching had compromised the church at Pergamum, and instead of confronting the false teaching with the sword of truth, they faced the sword of truth for discipline. Our human tendency is often to rationalize, especially in an attempt to avoid confrontation, even in the church. Christ called them to repent. God gives us windows of grace in which we must find the courage to make the right choice and honor his word. He will bring us to a moment of decision, and he will discipline those who fail the test of faith. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 2:18 ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>THYATIRA</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST NOT TOLERATE FALSE TEACHERS. The church at Thyatira was a hard-working, loving, faithful, serving, enduring church with one fatal flaw. They had fallen prey to a false teacher and had compromised their faith. They compounded their sin by continuing to tolerate this person in their fellowship. We cannot tolerate false teachers and false teaching. And we cannot depend on our opinions and personal, man-made standards of compliance. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 3:1 ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>SARDIS</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST GET THE GOSPEL RIGHT. The church at Sardis had the gospel wrong. They had a reputation for being alive but they were dead. The life of a church is not determined by activity, size, location, demographics, denomination, programs or worship style. There is one deciding factor—the gospel. Dead or alive? Works or grace? If a church has the gospel wrong, then the church is dead. If we have the gospel wrong, we have nothing. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 3:7 ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>PHILADELPHIA</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO GOD’S WORD. Even a small church has the truly amazing opportunity to honor the name of Jesus Christ, which we do when we are faithful to his word. Unlike the impressive churches at Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea, the church at Philadelphia was outwardly unimpressive. But not to Christ. He would set an open door of service before them because they faithfully kept his word. No one could stop them if they held fast God’s word. 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”
(Revelation 3:14 ESV) “And to the angel of the church in <u>LAODICEA</u> write ...”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE MUST KNOW WHO WE ARE BEFORE CHRIST, NOT ONLY AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT ALSO AS A CHURCH. The church at Laodicea was another very impressive church. Just ask them. In fact, they may have been the most impressive of all, but no one in this church knew God. Not a single person. The Apostle Paul thirty years previously had fought for the Laodiceans (see Colossians 2, 4) that they would possess true riches in Christ! But the Laodiceans had by now fallen for the wisdom and riches of this world. They had no idea as to who they were before God. As we would say they were “clueless.” 	“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...”