



Pergamum: The Compromising Church

Week 4 | October 1st, 2023
Community Group Discussion Guide

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hall Family Farm Day

October 21, Lancaster, SC

On Saturday, October 21, we'll host a kids & families meet-up at Hall Family Farm in Lancaster, just outside of Charlotte. Hall Family Farm is a fall Saturday dream, complete with corn maze, hayrides, pumpkin patch, petting zoo, and more. Admission is free, and we'll be covering a 'Fun Pass' for each kid to enjoy pedal cars, a jungle gym, and a corn silo.

This event is designed to allow the families of Citizens an opportunity to connect with one another and have fun together.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

Family Vacation

November 10-12, Black Mountain, NC

Registration for this year's Family Vacation is now open! We value the chance to get away, retreat, rest, and spend time together as a church family, and we'd love for you to join us this year! On November 10-12, we are heading to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC.

Family vacation is open to all Citizens Church members, members-in-progress (have taken membership class), and children of current members. The cost of the trip is \$100/adult and \$25/child. Scholarships are available if needed, but please talk to Dan about that sooner rather than later.

If you're planning to attend, please register ASAP. The earlier you register, the easier it is for us to plan for the weekend. You can register and get more details by clicking the graphic below.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

REVIEW THE MISSION

Take some time to review who various people are building relationships with and seeking to share the gospel with.

Pray for these individuals - that God would open their eyes to the good news of the gospel.

PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

Open with a brief word of prayer: “God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Allow us to hear your voice and experience your work among us. Come Holy Spirit.”

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Read Revelation 2:12-17

“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives 14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. 15 Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Close with this short prayer: “. Lord, we pray for the Spirit in us to help us see the idols and desires of our hearts. Give us the strength and satisfaction in you to turn away from our sinful ways and confess where we compromise with our sin. May the freedom given to us by Jesus’ life and death lead us to life in Him and death to our sin.

As you reflect on Revelation 2:12-17, what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?

SERMON DISCUSSION

COMPROMISE

Throughout church history, many groups have tried to take on a Jesus-AND something else lifestyle. For Pergamum, the followers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans tried to compromise their faith by giving in to sin such as idolatry (the worship of false gods), drunkenness, and sexual temptation.

The teachings could be summarized as:

- Balaam – Do whatever you want, as long as it makes you feel good.
- Nicolaitans – Do whatever you want, Jesus is full of love and grace.

Which of these two false teachings tempt you the most when it comes to compromising with sin?

JESUS HATES COMPROMISE

Compromising with sin is a big deal to Jesus. He tells the church in Pergamum in Revelation 2:16 – Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

Jesus hates compromise for two reasons:

First – He is jealous for His glory, and will not give us over to a lesser love.

James 4:4-5 – *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?*

Second – He wants to protect us from destruction, which compromise leads to.

James 1:14-15 – *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?*

What are the current compromises you are making with sin?

Spend some time talking about how these sins are robbing Jesus of glory and leading to destruction.

COMMAND AND PROMISE

Jesus gives us a command and a promise. The command is to stop compromising and to repent, turning away from idolatry and sin.

He then offers a promise to the one who conquers:

- Jesus offers Himself as **the bread of life**, which satisfies the cravings and longings of our soul.
- Jesus offers us a **a white stone entrance ticket**, which is a sign we are welcomed into the family of God and set to feast with Him forever in His Kingdom.
- Jesus gives us **a new name, a new identity**. We are no longer defined by our sin, but are the beloved sons and daughters of God.

Everything Jesus offers to those who conquer, are the very things sin promises but cannot deliver. Satisfaction. Intimacy. Identity. All on offer through the cross. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus offers:

How do you need to follow Jesus' command to stop compromising and repent right now?

How does Jesus freely give you what you are after when you compromise with sin?

SERIES PRACTICES

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing various spiritual practices during each sermon series. These practices are meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

PRACTICE #1 - FASTING

In its most basic form, Biblical fasting is the intentional abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose. As Christians, we intentionally face the pain of hunger and lack to direct our hearts towards God.

For resources on fasting, check out:

- www.rhythmsandformation.com
- <https://citychurchknox.com/sermons/formation-v-fasting-rethinking-our-relationship-with-food>

For this series, we are encouraging individuals to fast from all food and non-water beverages from dinner Wednesday through dinner Thursday, as a means of focusing our attention on God and asking Him to deepen our love for Him. Although there is freedom to adjust this to fit your various circumstances or season.

PRACTICE #2 - WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

The second practice we are inviting our church family to participate in is that of worship through song. Singing is a great way to help connect what we believe in our minds to what we experience in our hearts.

To that end, our worship team has put together a playlist to help guide this practice for us, that you can sing along with in your car, in your home, on a run, or anywhere else that seems appropriate.

You can find the playlist here:



Take some time now before you close discussing plans for fasting and worship during the next 8 weeks as a group.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.