

Application Guide: “Intolerable Lukewarmness” (Rev. 3:14-21)

July 10th, 2005: Nate Irwin, Associate Director of Outreach, gave a stirring sermon on Jesus’ words to the Laodicean church along with appropriate applications for us today. The key point concerning the Laodicean’s was that their lives were so self-focused and self-driven that their deeds were rendered totally useless for the Kingdom of God. The overriding question for us today is, “Are you engaged in *doing* work for the Kingdom, or are you simply wrapped up in *your* life?”

1. *“I know your deeds...”* (v. 15). Our faith is like wind – we cannot see it, only its effects. If we claim that our “wind” is blowing, we must take a look at what effects it is producing (cf. Mt. 7:15-23; 15:18-19; James 3:9-12).
 - a. What do our actions and words say about our true selves, our heart? Is it completely possible to measure one’s heart motives by looking at their actions?
 - b. What actions do we often list as stereotypical measures to determine if someone is a Christian (e.g. – go to church, prayed a prayer to receive Christ, etc)?
 - c. How do these stereotypical measures often fail as true measurements of one’s heart? In other words, what “Christian” things can people do to “play the part” and yet not truly be following Christ? If so many of these deeds can be done simply out of religious fervor, what deeds truly reflect a life that follows Christ (cf. Isa. 58:6-7; Mich. 6:8; Zech. 7:1-10; Phil. 2:1-8)?
2. *“You are lukewarm – neither hot or cold...”* (16) Before we change, we must understand our true condition in the Kingdom. As Christians, there are only two positions: Either we can be useful (hot/cold) or useless (lukewarm).
 - a. Aside from Jesus literally telling us our condition (like he told the churches in Revelation), are there any practical ways we can evaluate our own spiritual condition and help others evaluate theirs? How can we evaluate if our deeds are useful for the Kingdom or if we are simply wrapped up in our own interests?
 - b. If we are so blind to our own sin (and so good at deceiving ourselves), what is necessary to make this evaluation beneficial? What standard should we use?
3. *“But you do not realize that you are wretched...”* (17) Because of our sin nature and propensity to look only at externals – rather than our hearts – it is easy to not even realize how spiritually impoverished we really are (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7; Mt. 23:24-28).
 - a. What things in your life often prevent you from seeing your spiritual poverty or cause you to start thinking, “I’m a pretty good person. I don’t have any areas in my life that need change.”? What keeps you from living in dependence on God?
 - b. What role does pride play in all of this? How do we know we have pride in our hearts (cf. Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 3:18-21; James 4:1-10)
4. *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock...”* (20) There is a cure to our lukewarm lifestyle and spiritual poverty. We must receive from Christ true riches. We must repent, live in humble dependence on him, and open up our lives to live in his presence. In other words, if we aren’t spending time with Christ, we will have nothing to give to others.
 - a. Do you consider your relationship with Christ to be the greatest treasure of all? What will your life look like if Christ is your most valuable possession?
 - b. Do you desire Christ’s convicting and healing presence in your life? Do you welcome his fellowship? Is he sitting at the throne of your heart?