

# Seven Letters to Seven Churches

## The Church in Ephesus



## Welcome

The Book of Revelation is complicated and mysterious. In this study, your group will learn about the *practical* message that Jesus gave to real churches who were going through real persecution. By the end of this study, you will understand that the Book of Revelation is a revelation of the *person of Jesus*, which will make all the difference!

## Series Overview

*Week 1: Study God's word to the church in Ephesus, a faithful church that had forgotten its first love.*

*Week 2: The church in Smyrna was enduring great persecution and slander. Allow God to challenge your Life Group. How do you typically respond when people seek to harm you or your reputation?*

*Week 3: Learn about the dangers of compromise along with the church in Pergamum.*

*Week 4: Have you ever wondered how faith should influence our work? Gain some insights from Jesus' message to the working man's church in Thyatira.*

*Week 5: Get a "wake up call" along with the church in Sardis.*

*Week 6: Be encouraged and inspired by Jesus' words to the long-suffering church in Philadelphia.*

*Week 7: Is your faith hot, cold, or lukewarm? Explore the ramifications of your answer to this question, and get a godly perspective with the church in Laodicea.*

## Discipleship Insights

- There is a temptation to see the Book of Revelation as a cryptic message meant to decode in order to predict the future. When we give in to this temptation, we will almost certainly miss out on all the practical teachings of Jesus that are recorded in the first few chapters. Revelation was a real letter, written to real people, in real churches. Keep your group members focused on the *revelation of Jesus*, and not on making predications.
- One of the constant refrains of this study is: *whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches*. Before you begin the study, tell your group about this passage. Then brainstorm the characteristics of a person who "has ears to hear." Use these characteristics as guideposts throughout your study to help point your members back to humility and teachability when the urge to be defensive rises.

- At the end of the study, do a “Marks of Ownership” review. Which of the six marks of ownership were addressed in the study. What did your group learn?
  - Gather to Grow
  - Passionately Pursuing Jesus
  - Found People Find People
  - Life is Better Together
  - Generosity Builds God’s Kingdom
  - Made for More