

A Call to Faithfulness

When Facing Temptations

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Week 3

Revelation 2:18-29

Bible Reading Plan

[Start the Plan](#)

Click the link above to read the Bible along with your group.

1. What is something that you are easily tempted by without putting much thought to it?

Temptation is rarely loud and obvious. More often, it is subtle, persistent, and persuasive. It doesn't usually show up as something clearly evil—it shows up as something almost right, almost justified, almost harmless.

Welcome to week three of our series, “A Call to Faithfulness”. We’re taking a look at the words of Jesus to first-century churches in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, found in the book of Revelation. We explored lessons from the churches in Ephesus and Pergamum, and today we’re taking a look at the church in Thyatira.

Read Revelation 2:18-29.

There are a lot of things this church was doing right, but they were tolerating something deeply wrong. And Jesus’ message to them speaks powerfully to us today: How do we face temptation in a way that is healthy, faithful, and centered on Christ?

Thyatira was not a major political or religious center like Ephesus or Pergamum. It was a working-class town, known for its trade guilds—kind of like ancient labor unions. There were guilds for wool workers, linen workers, leather workers, bronze smiths, and especially dyers of purple cloth. In fact, in Acts 16, we meet Lydia, a seller of purple goods from Thyatira—a successful businesswoman.

Now here's the key: These trade guilds were deeply tied to pagan worship. If you wanted to succeed in business, you had to participate in guild events. These events often included feasts dedicated to pagan gods, and immoral practices that went along with them. So, For a Christian in Thyatira, temptation wasn't just personal—it was economic, social, and cultural. To refuse participation could mean losing your job, your income, your status, and even your relationships. That's the pressure this church was under.

2. When have you experienced the tension in a work, social, or culture setting, where you felt pressure to participate in something that might compromise your faithfulness to Jesus?

In verse 18 Jesus introduces himself in a striking way. “The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze” (**Revelation 2:18, ESV**).

His eyes are like fire—He sees everything. His feet are like bronze—He stands in strength and authority. This is not a passive observer. This is the risen Christ who sees through appearances and into reality. We are often tempted to think: “No one will know.” “It's not a big deal.” “God understands.” But Jesus says, “I see.” Not just what we do—but why we do it. Not just our actions—but our compromises.

A.W. Tozer once wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us” (A. W. Tozer). If we think of God as distant, we will drift into compromise. But if we see Him as He is—holy, present, and all-seeing—it changes how we face temptation.

3. How does knowing that Jesus sees and understands what's really going on inside you, change the way you think about compromise?

Look at v. 19: “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first” (**Revelation 2:19, ESV**). This is one of the most encouraging verses in all the letters. This church is: Loving, Faithful, Serving, Enduring, Growing. They're not stagnant—they're improving! And yet... they are still in danger.

This is important: Spiritual growth in some areas does not excuse compromise in others!

You can be: Active in ministry, Generous in giving, Kind in relationships...and still be tolerating sin. One pastor put it this way: “You can be sincere and still be seriously wrong.” The Christian life is not about selective obedience. It is about wholehearted devotion.

So, even though Jesus affirms the good qualities of this church, He says this in v. 20: “But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel...” (**Revelation 2:20, ESV**). This is the turning point. Jesus rebukes them not for committing sin directly—but for tolerating it. “Jezebel” is likely not her real name, but a symbolic reference to the Old Testament queen who led Israel into idolatry and immorality. This woman in Thyatira was teaching that it was acceptable to participate in pagan practices—perhaps arguing that it was necessary for survival. And the church allowed it.

4. **Why can it be difficult to know when to just show grace toward others and when something shouldn’t be overlooked?**

Here’s the danger: Temptation becomes far more powerful when it is normalized. Instead of resisting, they rationalized. Instead of confronting, they accommodated. Instead of standing firm, they blended in. John Piper once said, “Sin gets its power by persuading me to believe that I will be happier if I follow it” (John Piper). That’s exactly what was happening.

Temptation rarely says, “Reject God outright.” Instead, it whispers: “You can follow Jesus and still do this.” “This isn’t that serious.” “Everyone else is doing it.” “You need this to get ahead.” For the believers in Thyatira, the temptation was tied to livelihood and acceptance. For us, Temptation may look like:

- Compromising integrity for success
- Justifying small sins as harmless
- Blending in with culture to avoid conflict

C.S. Lewis famously wrote, “Indeed the safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings” (C. S. Lewis)

5. **How do you view God in all of this? As an angry judge just waiting for you to mess up?**

Here’s the attitude of Jesus in v. 21: “I gave her time to repent...” (**Revelation 2:21a, ESV**). This is one of the most sobering truths in the passage. Jesus had given time. Grace had been extended. Opportunity

for repentance had been offered. But it was ignored. “...but she refuses to repent.” (**Revelation 2:21b, ESV**).

God is patient—but His patience is not permission. Sometimes people mistake delayed consequences for divine approval. But the delay is actually mercy—a window for repentance. If you are tolerating sin today, hear this clearly: God’s kindness is calling you back, not excusing your direction.

Even though we don’t like to talk about it in our culture today, there are consequences. In verses 22-23, Jesus warns the church of judgment—not out of cruelty, but out of justice. Unchecked temptation leads to: Deeper bondage, Greater deception, Broader damage. Sin never stays contained. It affects: Your heart, Your relationships, Your witness.

6. Have you experienced the consequences of sin and temptation? In what ways have you seen that sin rarely stay contained?

Jesus says something powerful in verse 23: “All the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart” (**Revelation 2:23, ESV**). He cares about the inner life. We often focus on behavior—but Jesus targets the heart.

And so, there is a call, a call to hold on, to hold fast. “Only hold fast what you have until I come” (**Revelation 2:25, ESV**). For those who had not given in, Jesus gives a simple command: Hold fast. Not innovate. Not compromise. Not adjust to culture. Just hold on. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is simply remain faithful.

Galatians 6:9 reminds us: “Let us not grow weary of doing good” (**Galatians 6:9, ESV**). Faithfulness is not flashy—but it is powerful. And when we do hold on, Jesus gives us a promise. Jesus promises authority and reward to those who overcome (verses 26-28). This is crucial: We don’t overcome temptation by willpower alone—but by relationship with Christ.

Temptation loses its grip when: Christ becomes more beautiful, His promises become more real, His presence becomes more satisfying. Thomas Chalmers called this “The expulsive power of a new affection” (Thomas Chalmers, 1780-1847). In other words, Sin is not defeated by trying harder—but by loving Jesus more.

So how do we actually do this? How do we stand in the face of the seductive lure of temptation and hold fast to Jesus?

- Recognize it early—Temptation grows in secrecy. Identify it quickly.
- Refuse to rationalize—Stop justifying what God has already addressed.
- Run to Christ, not just away from sin—In fact, running to Christ is what empowers us to turn from sin.
- Remove opportunities—Don't circle the donut shop eight times.
- Rely on community—Isolation strengthens temptation; accountability weakens it.
- Remember the cost—Sin always takes more than it promises.
- Rest in grace ... but respond in obedience—Grace empowers holiness—it doesn't excuse compromise.

Revelation 2:18–29 is not just a warning—it is an invitation. An invitation to: Live with integrity, Resist compromise, Walk in holiness, Trust in Christ. Jesus is not calling us to perfection—but to faithfulness. Not to isolation—but to devotion. Not to fear—but to courage rooted in Him.

7. Where are you tolerating what God is calling you to confront? Is it: A hidden habit? A compromised conviction? A rationalized sin?

Today is the day to respond. Not with guilt—but with repentance. Not with shame—but with surrender. Not with fear—but with faith. Because The One who sees you fully...is the One who loves you deeply...and the One who calls you forward.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (**Revelation 2:29, ESV**).