

Fall 2009
SERMON BASED
SMALL GROUP SERIES:

Radical Road Trip: Revelation 2 and 3

Discussion Guide
Week #2

Small Groups 
Transforming Community @ RBCPC

Week #2 THE COST OF LOYALTY

You have abandoned the love you had at first

Acts 16: 9-10; 22-24. (Today's New International Version)

⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

²² The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. ²³ After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴ When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Revelation 2:8-11 (Today's New International Version)

To the Church in Smyrna

⁸ "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. ⁹ I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. ¹¹ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Those who are victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Notes For Reflection:

Facilitator's Guide

Using this Discussion Guide

The role of the facilitator is to pick the questions that you feel will lead the group into the best discussion and sharing. The facilitator does not need to push through every question! You are encouraged to *pick at least one question from each section*. Don't be tempted to rush through the conversation in order to get all the questions asked. Instead, take time in each section to let people think, share, and respond to one another. Further, don't feel bound by these questions. Use these as a springboard and trust the Holy Spirit to lead the conversation with you.

Facilitator's Tip of the Week: Deepening the Prayer Life of a Group

Has your group gone deeper in praying together? One of the true marks of a sincere faith is a dynamic prayer life with God. How can a Small Group facilitate growth in prayer? Well, one practical way is to learn how to pray together. Experiment with different forms of prayer: praying for people in the church, pray for neighbors and friends by name who are in need, pray for each other's needs. Maybe, even, bring that question to the entire group: What would it look like for us to grow as a praying community? Any thoughts? (And, if you stumble on something, please send it back to the Small Groups team to share with others!)

Consider attending as a group:

Healing Prayer Service

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Our Lord is the Great Physician. The Lord is able to heal physical illnesses, emotional wounds and spiritual emptiness. Are you or a loved one in need of God's healing touch? RBCPC's Prayer Ministry invites you to a Healing Prayer Service to be held in the Chapel, on Sunday, Sept. 27, at 6:00 p.m. Pastor Bruce and the Prayer Teams will be available for times of personal prayer. Any questions, please call Kathy Johnson at 858 675-9557 or kjohnson@rbcp.org.

Week #2 THE COST OF LOYALTY

You have abandoned the love you had at first

Start It: connecting with each other

- In our society, who embodies the traits of sacrifice and loyalty?
- Share a moment in your life when someone showed “total sacrifice” or loyalty.
- Can you think of a story or film that depicts sacrifice?
- Why do you think our faith grows in the midst of difficulties?

Study It: understanding God's word

- Someone read **Acts 16: 9-10; 22-24**. In these couple of verses, what do we learn about sacrifice and loyalty from Paul and Silas' actions?
- Read **Revelations 2:8-11**. If you were to summarize Jesus' thoughts on the Smyrniens, what would you say? What do they say about Jesus' values?
- In verse 9 Jesus states, “I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich”. What does Jesus see as being “rich” in this passage? Can you contrast Jesus' idea of rich with our society's?
- Who are those who receive a “Crown of life” in the eyes of Jesus? What do their lives look like?

Live It: making truth stick

- In these passages, it is clear that the early followers faced persecution even to the point of death; what does persecution look like in our lives?
- What is your level of sacrifice in your daily walk with Jesus? What are some possible hurdles?
- What actions do we need to take to become more Smyrna-like?

Pray It: inviting God's spirit to change you and the world

- For ourselves: that we may be people who embody sacrifice and loyalty in the way Jesus means it.
- For our church: that we remain faithful to our faith in spite of “persecution” and hardship.