

Fall 2009
SERMON BASED
SMALL GROUP SERIES:

Radical Road Trip: Revelation 2 and 3

Discussion Guide
Week #3

Small Groups 
Transforming Community @ RBCPC

Week #3 No Compromise *Yet you remain true to my name*

Revelation 2:12-17 (NRSV)

12"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13"I know where you are living, where Satan's throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives. 14But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication. 15So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

Matthew 12:1-2, 9-13 (NRSV)

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." 9He left that place and entered their synagogue; 10a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. 11He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." 13Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other.

Notes For Reflection:

Facilitator's Guide

Facilitator's Tip of the Week:

There are several words that often describe Bible-study sessions in small groups: useful, interesting, pleasant, informative. But very seldom does studying the Bible as a group become transformational. That's because most Bible studies are aimed at transferring information, not transforming lives. Start a conversation at the beginning of your time together asking:

1. *What would it look like for us to focus on transformation?*
2. *In what ways are we being transformed? And*
3. *What might God want us to change in order to be transformed more?*

- Adapted from www.smallgroups.com

Taking it Further: Don't Let Groups Become "Fellowship Only"

This can be tough, because fellowship is often cited as the single greatest benefit that entices people to join a small group. "I want to have friends." "I want to make close friends." "I'd like to be able to count on people, just like family." Almost everyone wants these things.

But when a group is left only to fellowship, people will just hang out together. And while fellowship is critical for true discipleship to happen, it's not the only critical factor. When we just eat and fellowship together, the only growth we get is in our waist. Bringing in active discipleship while maintaining fellowship is all part of balancing the purposes in small-group life.

- Steve Gladden, pastor of Small Groups at Saddleback Church

Practical Helps:

Possible issue: *One person continuously interrupts and monopolizes the conversation.*

Helpful tips:

1. Limit the answer time to one minute answers/observations. After each person has had a turn, offer the opportunity to go around the group again. You can even use a small hour-glass timer from a game – make it fun!
2. Rather than asking questions for anyone to answer, call on individuals by name.
3. Encourage the practice of listening without interrupting. This will require a group effort – you can even make a game out of it – ex: Whoever interrupts the most has to clean up the dishes!

Week #3 No Compromise

Yet you remain true to my name

START IT

- List the most pervasive values in American culture – the values that are so ingrained, we hardly notice them.
- Can you think of an institution or individual that compromised itself into oblivion or obsolescence? Share 2-3 examples in your group.

STUDY IT

- Read Revelation 2: 12-17. What do you learn from Jesus' observations about the church at Pergamum and His knowledge of their context? What is Jesus' chief complaint against the church at Pergamum?
- Jesus says that the church at Pergamum remained true to his name despite persecution and trials. What does Jesus' warning to the church at Pergamum say about a brand of Christianity where there is nothing more required of us than to say that we believe in Jesus as our Savior?
- Why would Jesus offer those who overcome these challenges "hidden manna" and a "white stone with a new name?" What insights do these gifts offer into what the church members were really seeking as they participated in other religious rituals?
- Read Matthew 12: 1-2, 9-13. How does Jesus' "compromise" about Sabbath law differ from the compromises the church at Pergamum were making?
- Ecclesiastes 3:8 says, "There is a time to love and a time to hate." Amos 5:15 instructs, "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice." What does this look like in our daily lives?

LIVE IT

- Discuss how wholesale pursuit of the American values you came up with in the first question might lead us to compromise our faith.
- Where do you see yourself compromising in your own life? Why? Is it more out of convenience or because you believe there is no other reasonable course of action?
- In what ways do you see our church being too influenced by the culture in which we live?

PRAY IT

- That God would reveal where our faith is weakened by compromise and that we would have the courage to stand firm.
- That as we go through the assessment process, and the ensuing changes, RBCPC will find a way to be culturally relevant while honoring Jesus.