



Series Overview and Guides

2018-2019 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 6

JUNE-JULY 2019

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

We build for victory by obeying Jesus.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near."

— Revelation 1:3 NASB

"He that hath an ear, let him hear.' Churches are made up of individuals, and it is individuals who determine the spiritual life of the assembly. So while reading these messages, we must apply them personally as we examine our own hearts."

— Warren Wiersbe
Be Victorious

Premise

why we are studying this

We build to last by establishing our lives – and our churches – on the rock of Jesus' words. It stands to reason then that specific statements He gave to churches about their lives and legacy are worthy of our attention. The benefits are great and stretch beyond Christian churches. The world around us needs our faithfulness, without which liberty and justice will erode from all.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

— Revelation 2:7 HCSB

"Any account of the rise of [freedom] must give a large place to the spiritual passion and intellectual energy of Christians. Men and women of faith knew, as Tertullian had written in the third century, that religion cannot be imposed from without...That conviction, embodied in the lives of those who were persecuted and given voice in the writings of their champions, taught others there could be no justice in society without liberty in the things of God."

— Robert Louis Wilkin
Liberty in the Things of God

"The heavenly voice had specific messages designed to address the real needs of specific churches. However, since the difficulties these congregations faced have been encountered by other congregations throughout history, even to our own day, the messages meant for the original seven churches are just as relevant now as they were then."

— Charles R. Swindoll
Letters to the Churches Then and Now

Theme

what the study is about

The seven churches of revelation convict and encourage all Christians and all churches since. We learn about obedience and peace in our ever-faithful Lord. We especially learn to live out the seven commendations given by Jesus. That is, to: love, endure, confess Jesus, work, wake up, keep the word, and open the door to the Lord's fellowship.

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"Only hold on to what you have until I come."

— Revelation 2:25 CSB

"These messages reflect the twin dangers faced by the church – persecution and compromise...While a few are proving faithful and are facing persecution as a result, many churches are in danger of losing their influence and identity because of compromise...Jesus gives each church a clear but difficult choice: listen to his voice and persevere in obedience or cave in to the surrounding culture."

— J. Daniel Hays and J. Scott Duvall
The Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook



Frisco Bible Church
a redeemed community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 1:9-20

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus (re)introduces Himself to John, now seen as the Glorified Son of Man. He commands John to take a message spoken for each of seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. These messages are the middle part of the revelation (what is), following the presentation of Jesus as God (what you have seen) and preceding the presentation regarding the tribulation and following eras (what will take place after this). Though clearly grounded in that time and place, each letter has direct correlation and application to churches and Christians today, like all NT epistles.

OBJECTIVE

We heed the Lord.

REWARDS

"The very best thing about these rewards is that it will make the Lord Jesus happy if He can give them to us. He wants us to have them, and He will be even happier than we are when we receive them. We can have these rewards if we are faithful every day and let the Lord Jesus rule in our lives. 'Trust and obey' should be our motto. If we do that, we may be sure of having rewards when the Lord Jesus gives them out."

— Donald Grey Barnhouse
Teaching the Word of Truth

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that in the weeks to come we will have ears to "hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Session 1: What the Spirit Says to the Churches

1. As we begin this new study, discuss John and his situation.
 - Who is he?
 - Why is he on the island of Patmos?
2. Read Revelation 1:9-20 together.
 - How does Jesus reintroduce Himself to John?
 - What do the titles in verses 17-18 tell us about the speaker?
 - What does it mean to "have the keys of Death and Hades"?
3. Describe the three aspects of what John is to write (v. 19), and what is included in each.
4. Read the Objective, Premise, and Theme of this study from the first page of this study guide.
5. Why is it important for each of us individually to heed God's Word so that we, and our church, will "build to last"?





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 2:1-11

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus speaks to Ephesus, and all subsequent churches, pointing out the first concept in victory – love. By loving Jesus, a church is positioned to do more than maintain doctrinal integrity. It is positioned to live out Jesus’ commission, to see the love for Jesus overflow into love for others, and to let all know that these people are followers of Christ. In His missive to Smyrna, the Lord calls Christians to endure affliction, poverty, slander, and imprisonment. Through Ephesus, the Lord reminds churches that they can be punished if they build poorly and are unrepentant. Through the two churches, He assures Christians of the millennial and eternal blessings that will be ours.

OBJECTIVE

We love and endure.

2 JOHN 6

“And this is love: that we walk according to His commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: you must walk in love.” (CSB)

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we hold to the truth, act in love, patiently endure, and repent when we fail—both personally and as church.

Session 2: Love (Ephesus) and Endure (Smyrna)

1. Read the letters to the churches at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) and at Smyrna (vv. 8-11). What are some common elements in each letter?
 - How does Jesus encourage the churches?
 - What was happening at each church, and what has each done well?
 - Why is it important for us to understand that God knows what is happening in and around us, both personally and as a body?
3. In verses 4-6, Jesus exhorts the church at Ephesus to repent.
 - Of what should they repent, and how should they behave differently?
 - Why is repentance important to the Christian life, both personally and as a church?
 - What is the consequence of unrepentance?
4. In verse 10, Jesus exhorts the church at Smyrna to endure.
 - Why is endurance important to the Christian life, both personally and as a church?
 - What are two specific means by which He tells them to endure? How is it possible for them—and us—to do those things?
 - What can your LifeGroup do to help each other—and our church as a whole—faithfully endure through trials?
5. What can we learn from the statements of assurance given to each church (verses 7 and 11)?





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 2:12-17

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus addresses the church at Pergamum, home of a massive Askleptorium (hospital complex). This city was renowned for its progressive sense of worship. In 29 B.C., Pergamum became the first city in Asia to build a temple for worship of a living human king. The temple of Zeus and its magnificent altar attracted crowds as one of the 7 wonders of the world. But most of all, they venerated the god Asklepios. His huge complex of buildings brought massive riches to the city. Learning special "secrets" from the gods formed the core of Asklepios' worship, a journey assisted by sexual promiscuity and hallucinogenic drugs.

This proud city has pressured Christians to conform, but they have stood strong even to death. However, they are now showing signs of compromise in sexual impurity and spiritual syncretism. Jesus warns them to repent and stay pure, reminding the church that His people will possess eternally the true and great secrets of God's grace.

OBJECTIVE

We stay pure.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we stay pure—and build to last—by daily encouraging each other to hold fast to our Lord Jesus Christ and our faith in Him.

Session 3: Stay Pure (Pergamum)

1. Think back to the early days of your new life in Christ. What pressures did you face to maintain previous habits that were now contrary to walking with the Holy Spirit?
2. Read the letter to the church at Pergamum in Revelation 2:12-17.
 - Pergamum was famous for its temple to Zeus, a wonder of the ancient world. What kinds of practices were commonplace in and around ancient Greek temples?
 - How was becoming a Christian different than adopting any other cultural "god"? (See Ephesians 4:17-24, Colossians 3:5-10, and 1 Peter 1:13-19.)
3. What does Jesus say that the church at Pergamum has done well (v. 13)?
 - Why is it important for Christians to hold to Jesus's name and not deny the faith in our overtly sexualized society?
 - What Scriptures encourage you to hold fast to Christ and faith in Him?
 - Who helps you to hold fast to biblical truth?
4. In verses 14-16, Jesus exhorts the church to repent of compromises in holiness and doctrine.
 - What happens when such compromises are tolerated in a church?
 - What is your responsibility to help your brothers and sisters in Christ stay pure? (See, for example, 1 Corinthians 8:4-13 or Romans 14:1-23.)
5. Verse 17 describes eternal blessings for the one who overcomes. Why is it important to focus on eternal blessings and not temporary pleasures? (See Colossians 3:1-4.)





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 2:18-29

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus reveals Himself as the God who is awesome and empowers work. He expects His followers to labor for good, as many in Thyatira are doing, seeing later deeds that outshine the earlier ones. That requires a desire to repent and perseverance to keep working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

OBJECTIVE

We do Jesus' works.

THE OVERCOMER

"The overcomer" refers to those believers who overcome the specific challenges of these verses and are rewarded for their faithfulness. This is suggested by the words, "who keeps My deeds until the end," in verse 26.

To keep Christ's deeds means to experience Christ's life and character in contrast to Jezebel's works. Keeping His deeds is a result of overcoming through the walk of faith and daily fellowship. We must remember that Christ is not calling us to overcome in our own strength, but to appropriate His strength and power through the knowledge of the Word and by faith.

—J. Hampton Keathley, III
The Message to Thyatira

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we keep Jesus' works until the end.

Session 4: Work (Thyatira)

1. Read the letter to the church at Thyatira together (Rev. 2:18-29). Pay attention to the mention of "works" and the context of each occurrence.
 - Why is it significant that the later works exceed the earlier ones?
 - The Lord knows our works of service to Him. Is this an encouragement to you? Explain.
3. What are the works mentioned in verses 20-23?
 - How do these works differ from those in verse 19?
 - Why do we choose to tolerate sin in ourselves? How can we instead help each other to follow Paul's advice in Colossians 3:5-10?
 - What are the consequences of tolerating sin and unrepentance in the church?
4. What are the works mentioned in verses 24-29?
 - What is the exhortation to the church in this section?
 - What is their, and our, encouragement to hold fast to truth?
5. What are some things we can do to help our church build to last through love, faithfulness, service, and endurance?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 3:1-6

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus excoriates Sardis for being sleepy in the sense of 1 Peter 5:8 and Ephesians 5:14 (which may itself have been a hymn based on many Isaiah passages). They are warned that if they continue their somnambulant slide, Jesus will remove them. The needed response is to repent, be alert, strengthen ministry, *shma* what has been received – in a summary phrase, to “wake up!” the one who awakens in time will be rewarded by fellowship with Jesus and sanctification represented by walking in white. In a similar way, all Christians should remember the blessings that are ours through our placement in the Great Overcomer Jesus: white clothes, permanent place in eternal life, and commendation before the Father.

OBJECTIVE

We wake up.

MIRACULOUSLY RESCUED

“Never get over the fact that you are miraculously rescued by God’s grace!”

—Dr. Sumner Wemp

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we stay awake, alert, and active in following our Lord.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 5: Wake Up (Sardis)

1. Read the letter to the church in Sardis, Revelation 3:1-6.
 - How can a church have a reputation for being alive, but actually be dead?
 - How can traditionalism, enslavement to the past, or even previous success be a hindrance to the current vitality of a church?

2. According to verses 2-3, it is not too late for this church.
 - What does Jesus tell them to do?
 - Why do we need to stay alert? See 1 Peter 5:8.
 - What are some ways by which we can remember, keep, and strengthen what we have received and heard? See Ephesians 5:8-21.

3. Read verses 4-5.
 - What is in store for those who remain faithful in doing the works God has called us to do?
 - Is there an area of sleepiness in your walk with God? How can this group pray for you to be strengthened in that area?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 3:7-13

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus is the holy, authentic, and sovereign Lord, the promised one of David. He commends the church at Philadelphia for keeping both scriptural fidelity and their witness to Christ, and doing so by grace (little power of their own). As reward, the church is granted an open door, ostensibly for evangelism. Further, the church will be rewarded with removal from the worldwide testing to come

He finishes by reminding Christians that in Him they overcome and are thus promised permanence of place in God's eternal temple. What a blessed reminder for Christians so often displaced!

OBJECTIVE

We keep the word and the witness.

HOLD FAST

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day is drawing near."

—Hebrews 10:23-25

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we obey Jesus's word, and not deny His name.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 6: Keep the Word (Philadelphia)

1. Read the letter to church at Philadelphia, Revelation 3:7-13. In verse 7, what does each of the four attributes tell us about Jesus?
 - Why is it easy to not do these things well?
 - Which of these three things is most difficult for you?
2. For what three things does Jesus commend the church (v. 8)?
 3. In verses 8-10, what does Jesus say He will do for the church, and how does each of these represent divine favor?
 4. How does knowing that the Lord will return help you to endure (v. 11)?
 5. Discuss the ultimate promises to the one who conquers (vv. 12-13), and how they differ from our current situation.
6. What do we have that we must hold on to? How can this group pray specifically for you to endure?





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Revelation 3:14-22

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus is the “So be it,” the true and faithful witness, and the Creator (see Colossians). He addresses Laodicea, the last Asian church to receive a letter. It is intriguing that the two cities sharing the same broad valley – Colossae (which though small received two Pauline epistles) and Hieroplois (which was a large and powerful church) – are unmentioned. Laodicea is wasting their time in the sewer, their work rejected because of complacent unawareness re: own sins. Jesus encourages a return to grace where dependence on Christ alone leads to true riches and growth. In fact, His fellowship, which includes loving discipline and all provision, is ever-ready for those who open the door by repentance. Jesus closes by reminding all Christians that they will reign with Him in the millennium as a result of being in Christ.

OBJECTIVE

We see truthfully and open the door to Jesus.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we have ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 7: Open the Door (Laodicea)

1. Read the letter to the church at Laodicea, Revelation 3:14-22.
 - Jesus is named “the originator of God’s creation” (v. 14, CSB). Have you thought of Him in that way?
 - Compare Colossians 1:15-18 and Hebrews 1:1-3. How does this change your understanding of what it meant for Him to be born as a man, to suffer, and to die on a cross?
2. Compare what this church believes about itself with what God sees it to be (vv. 15-18).
 - What does God think of the work this church is doing? What must they change?
 - How can we guard against our own self-righteous blind spots?
 - How does God’s provision surpass the physical, leading to life transformation?
3. Read verses 18-20 and Hebrews 12:5-11.
 - What is God’s purpose in disciplining His children?
 - If you have experienced God’s discipline, what was the result? How can you encourage someone undergoing God’s discipline?
 - What is promised to those who respond to discipline with repentance?
4. These seven letters can help us build to last in our walk with God. Review them together.
 - List the attributes of Jesus.
 - List what He exhorts each church to do.
 - List what He will do for the overcomer.
5. Where do you see hope in this section of Revelation?

