

(Revelation) - The 7 Churches Keys to God's Blessing



- Do you ever wonder if you are short-circuiting God's blessing on your life by what you do or say? How can we grow closer to God and seek His favor?

God wants to bless His people. God wants to bless you. The essence of the messages to the seven churches is God's desire to bless His people and how to avoid the barriers that hinder His favor. The messages to the seven churches describe seven conditions or keys that God blesses.

Central Lesson: God wants to BLESS us, but there are conditions.

General Observations

1. The number **SEVEN** is symbolic for "completion & perfection." It appears 54 times in the book of Revelation.
2. These 7 churches were chosen for a special reason - to emphasize seven **QUALITIES** that needed to be addressed by all churches (and all Christians) who wish to be blessed by God and avoid the blessing busters.
3. There is a consistent **PATTERN** to the messages to the 7 churches (Church, Christ, Compliment, Criticism, Correction, and Consequence).

Church	Compliment	Criticism	Correction
1. Ephesus Rev. 2:1-7	Hard work, perseverance	Forsaken 1st love for God	Remember & repent
2. Smyrna Rev. 2:8-11	Suffered, persecution, poverty	(None)	Don't fear, be faithful
3. Pergamum Rev. 2:12-17	True to faith	Compromising	Repent
4. Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29	Love, faith, service	Immorality	Repent
5. Sardis Rev. 3:1-6	Working actively	Superficial, busy but dead	Remember, obey, repent
6. Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13	Faithful to God's Word	(None)	Hold on
7. Laodicea Rev. 3:14-22	(None)	Lukewarm	Be earnest & repent

7 Lessons OR Stages of Church History?

There were many other churches in Asia Minor at the time Revelation was written (see Colossians 1:2; 4:13). Some Bible teachers believe that the seven churches represent **seven stages of church history**. But there is little agreement about the time of each period and nothing is implied in the actual text to suggest these stages. This makes the stages of church history viewpoint doubtful. A better view is that the churches were chosen because of **the lessons they provide** for all churches and Christ-followers.

KEYS to God's Blessing

God is watching us and keeping a record. The message to all seven churches begins with the phrase *"I know...."* God's blessing is based upon what God sees.

1. **God Blesses Whole-Hearted LOVE for God and Others - The Church @ Ephesus (2:4).** *"4...You don't love me or each other as you did at first. 5 Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first."*
2. **God Blesses Whole-Hearted FAITH and Trust in Him over Fear - The Church @ Smyrna (2:10).** *"Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life."*
3. **God Blesses DOCTRINAL Devotion (A Biblical Worldview) - The Church @ Pergamum (2:14-15).** *"14 ...You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam.... 15 In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching."*
A **worldview** is the view we have about life and the world. We base our beliefs, values, attitudes, behavior, and decisions on the Bible. What is the primary influence on how you view life and the world—the Bible or this sinful world?
4. **God Blesses Moral PURITY - The Church @ Thyatira (2:20).** *"You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols." "25...hold tightly to what you have until I come."*
5. **God Blesses Genuine Spirituality, that is, a GROWING Relationship with God - The Church @ Sardis (3:1-3).** *"1...you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead [spiritually]. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what little remains,...3 Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again..."*
6. **God Blesses PERSISTENCY in Walking with and Working for Him - The Church @ Philadelphia (3:11).** *"...Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown."*
7. **God Blesses Whole-Hearted DEVOTION - Lukewarm - The Church @ Laodicea (3:15-16).** *"15...you are neither hot nor cold...16...you are like lukewarm water...I will spit you out of my mouth!" "19 ...So be diligent and turn from your indifference."*

Central Lesson: God wants to BLESS us, but there are conditions.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.