



## **‘The Fading Church’ Study Questions**

### **Read Revelations 2:8-17 - The churches of Smyrna and Pergamum**

#### **Smyrna (Verses 8-11)**

1. When was a time that you felt burdened by difficulties and hard times? Were you able to persevere in the midst of that situation? Why or why not?
2. Smyrna was one of the most prosperous cities in Asia Minor and a major centre of emperor worship. Looking at verse 9, how would you describe the current situation of the church in Smyrna?
3. What kind of pressures, afflictions, poverty and slander might we face in our world today?
4. Looking at verse 10, how would you describe the future situation of the church in Smyrna?
5. The church of Smyrna is a suffering church. In fact, one of the earliest – and most well-known – stories of a Christian martyr is that of Polycarp of Smyrna. What encouragement does Jesus give to the church in verses 10 & 11, when facing persecution or hard times?
6. Where do you find it hard to live out your faith? How are you feeling the “persecution” for speaking and living for Christ?
7. Jesus knows our situation, our struggles, and our opportunities. He wants us to take hold of His grace and love and succeed in our faith and life. How can this help inspire you to persevere when times are tough?

### Pergamum (Verses 12-17)

1. Why do you think that Jesus introduces Himself to the church at Pergamum as “Him who has the sharp, double-edged sword?”
2. How does it make you feel that Jesus acknowledges His “faithful witness” Antipas by name to the church? What does this say about how Jesus’ cares for and loves His servants even in death?
3. On the one hand, the church in Pergamum stayed true to Jesus, despite seeing persecution that even led to the death of a Christian they knew (verse 13). On the other hand, some of them embraced false teachings (verses 14-15). What do you think might have been the appeal of the false teaching?
4. How do you think it is possible for a church to have such an amazing victory while also having such glaring faults?
5. In this letter Jesus calls out the church in Pergamum for blending too much into culture. What are some harmful or helpful ways that you see Christians blending into culture today?
6. In your experience, what are the most prominent forms of cultural accommodation in the Christian churches today?
7. Have you ever faced similar pressures that the Church of Pergamum faced? Perhaps, you have been forced to compromise your morals or be “Politically Correct” on a subject you know is wrong. How do you balance being “Politically Correct” and yet be a faithful and good witness for Christ?
8. What do you think it means when Jesus says to “Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” (Verse 16)
9. What do you understand to be the ‘hidden manna’ and ‘white stones’ in verse 17?