

REVIVE

HOW THE SEVEN LETTERS OF REVELATION CAN
AWAKEN YOUR SOUL

ED LOVE

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Printed in the United States of America

*Cover design by Kevin Tucker at Collide Creative
Page design by PerfecType, Nashville, Tennessee*

Love, Ed (Pastor)

Revive : how the seven letters of Revelation can awaken your soul / Ed Love. – Franklin, Tennessee : Seedbed Publishing, ©2022.

pages ; cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN: 9781628249309 (paperback)

ISBN: 9781628249316 (mobi)

ISBN: 9781628249323 (epub)

ISBN: 9781628249330 (pdf)

OCLC: 1291321431

1. Bible. Revelation, II-III--Criticism, interpretation, etc.

2. Seven churches. 3. Spiritual life--Christianity. I. Title.

BS2825.52.L68 2022

228.06

2022930387



SEEDBED PUBLISHING
Franklin, Tennessee
seedbed.com

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Introduction

The Missing Ingredient

“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

—Ephesians 5:14b–16

Jennah! What happened to our cookies?”

“I don’t know, Dad. Did we leave something out?”

“Ah shoot, I know what we forgot! We forgot the baking soda!”

...

Ever since a child, I have enjoyed baking chocolate chip cookies. Over the years, I have perfected a recipe, which in my tribe is respectfully known as The Love Batch.

Throughout my lifetime, I have baked thousands of cookies, and my recipe is entrenched in my memory bank. However, on this particular day, my daughter and I were rushing through the baking process and we forgot something—something very important. As soon as the cookies came out of the oven, I noticed they didn't look fabulous and fluffy—they were flat, floppy, and not very enticing to eat.

Similar to the distractions during my baking episode, there are a lot of things in life which sidetrack us from our relationship with God. Sometimes we can become so busy and consumed with life that we forget the one ingredient which makes all the difference.

Life is ridiculously rushed. Work, school, kids, relationships, family, recreation, events, groups, and hobbies all are competing for our time, talent, and treasure. Truth be told, there are far more circumstances pulling us away from Jesus than pushing us closer to him.

When it comes to our relationship with God, most of us can relate to the feeling of being flat, floppy, and distant from God. In our core, we desire to be alive in Christ, but sometimes we settle for life in Groggyville.

Most of us know what it's like to be in that sleepy and distant condition. We know we are missing the snap,

crackle, and pop of God's best, but we can't seem to remain in a consistent state of revival. If we are honest, sometimes our most consistent trait is being inconsistent.

How do we avoid letting our commitment to following Jesus wane? Is there a faith-perspective that will continue to keep us connected and growing in Christ? Did God give us a picture of what this type of life could look like?

• • •

Throughout the Scriptures, God paints portrait after portrait of what life with him can look like if we choose to be all in—sold out to him and his mission in the world.

One of my favorite kaleidoscopic portraits is found in the opening section of the book of Revelation. In chapters 2 and 3, the author, John, presents us with seven short letters, written to seven churches, with seven different life-changing messages. Bear in mind, Jesus' seven different messages were originally written to specific churches, but like all Scripture, these ancient messages are incredibly relevant for everyone in every age.

Within this book, my goal is to unpack each letter and message in a fresh way, so you can absorb and apply John's original intent. In the end, I hope you will see the difference between chasing an unattainable happy life and pursuing a holy life filled with abundant joy. To be sure, Jesus was far more concerned about our holiness than our happiness. However, if

you understand holiness properly, you will see how holy living will lead to fulfillment in this life. The order is important.

As we journey through these power-packed letters, we will begin by exploring the historical, cultural, and contextual backdrop of each of the churches John wrote. After we discover John's original intent, then we will apply the messages to our lives and, hopefully, God's Spirit will penetrate our hearts and revive us again.

...

The year of 2020 will forever be engrained in our minds. For most of the world, 2020 will be remembered by quarantines, financial pressure, schedule changes, and masks. We will never forget the masks!

The worldwide pandemic certainly has been and continues to be a challenge, and has undoubtedly changed our lives in many ways. However, it was not all bad. One event had us looking to the stars again.

On May 30, 2020, Elon Musk's private space company, SpaceX, launched NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley into outer space. Beyond the achievement for SpaceX, the launch represented the first time NASA has sent its own astronauts since the end of the space shuttle program nearly a decade before.

The uniquely designed SpaceX capsule set its sights on the International Space Station, with the goal to make these

sorts of exploratory missions more regular. Future missions will include space tourism for privately paying people to sightsee the wonders of the galaxy. After the historic launch, NASA deputy administrator Jim Morhard stated: “We’re at the dawn of a new age and we’re really leading the beginning of a space revolution.”¹

Oftentimes life feels like an immobilized space program. The lights are off, the engine is cool, and the rocket fuel is stagnant. Yet we know God’s not done. God’s mission of hope must prevail. God is still longing for innovative souls to rise up, turn on the lights, and fire up the rocket boosters!

Staying lit and remaining alive in Christ certainly is challenging, but the world is desperate and wondering if there are any SpaceX-like Christians. Is there anybody who has joy even when the world is falling apart? Is there anybody who can advance the mission of God when the world is shutting down? Is there anybody that can faithfully endure opposition and persecution? Is there anybody who won’t bow down to the idols of our modern culture? Is there anybody who will allow Jesus to be their guiding authority in life? Anybody?

It seems as if God’s people are constantly craving and calling for revival in the land. This impulse isn’t a bad thing, but it’s important to recognize that revival cannot be orchestrated or controlled. Revival outbreak always starts and spreads with one soul filled with fiery faith.

I believe we're at the dawn of a new age and a revolutionary revival is on the way. There are many SpaceX-like Christians scattered throughout the world, and more and more will be raised up within the emerging generations.

Maybe you will be one. Let's go on a journey to discover how to die to our selfish impulses and resurrect with a genuine experience of personal revival that will stand the test of time!

1 | Ephesus

First and Foremost

We have suffered from the preaching of cheap grace. Grace is free, but it is not cheap. People will take anything that is free, but they are not interested in discipleship. They will take Christ as Savior but not as Lord.

—Vance Havner

In the year 2000, I moved from southern Missouri to northern Michigan, with the purpose of leading a student ministry in a well-respected church. As I entered into the northern realm, I quickly picked up on many cultural differences from the South to the North. Northerners were constantly making fun of my Southern drawl and how I said

certain words like *wersh* instead of *wash*. Yes, that's right, I wersh my cloths!

One of the social observations I discovered was how the northern region had two romantic holidays. Of course, there is the universally accepted Valentine's Day, but somewhere along the way someone decided the Great Lakes region needed another day in early October to get romantic. This additional romantic holiday is known as Sweetest Day.

When I first learned about this new Hallmark holiday, my cynical mind assumed it was created so flower businesses and candy shops could increase their revenue. Initially, I was opposed and outraged with the creation of another, culturally enforced, romantic holiday.

However, I quickly noticed something about my relationship with my wife. Without certain romantic checkpoints along the way, it is really easy to forget about her romantic needs. If my wife and I were to be honest, there have been several points within our relationship when we both could describe how our relationship "doesn't feel like it used to."

As humans, we are prone to drifting and settling for second best. Most of us, at some point in our love-filled relationships, will become complacent and take our loved one for granted.

We tend to do the same with God too.

The drifting and settling factors are some of the first things we need to be aware of in order to live fully alive

as a follower of Jesus. This is the primary subject being addressed within the first letter found in the book of Revelation.

As you read this letter, and the other letters in the following chapters, take your time and pay extra attention to the metaphors and images John utilizes. We will unpack them in further detail. Here is John's letter to the church in Ephesus, transmitted through the voice of Jesus:

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:

“I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

“But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at *first*! Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at *first*. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:1–7 NLT, emphasis added)

Ephesus 101

When we know something of the history of Ephesus and understand the cultural dynamics involved, it is easy to see why it comes first in the list of the seven churches, and why Jesus said, “Turn back to me and do the works you did at first” (Rev. 2:5 NLT). Plus, if the mail carrier was coming from the Roman exilic island of Patmos, where John was writing from, Ephesus would have been the natural first stop.¹

Within the first century, Pergamum was the capital of the province of Asia, but Ephesus was by far the greatest city in the region. Despite competition with both, Ephesus had proved more powerful than Pergamum politically and more favored by the Roman government than Smyrna.²

Since Ephesus was considered the gateway to Asia, a Roman writer once called Ephesus the *Lumen Asiae*, the Light of Asia.³ By the time John wrote his letter, the city had a growing population of more than 250,000. It was home to one of the major harbors in the region and most of the significant highways went through Ephesus on the way

to Rome. In addition, Ephesus was the home of the most famous annual games in Asia and people came from all over the region to engage in the diverse festivities.⁴ Because of its location, Ephesus was one of the wealthiest and greatest cities in all of Asia.

Ephesus was also the center for the worship of Artemis, otherwise known as Diana of the Ephesians. The Temple of Artemis is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was 425 feet long and 220 feet wide. It had 120 columns, each reaching 60 feet high. The image of Artemis was one of the most consecrated images in the ancient world.

Even more, Ephesus had many famous temples dedicated to the godhead of the Roman emperors such as Claudius, Nero, and Domitian—all beast-like persecutors of the early Christians. People would come from far away to worship the deity of Caesar within the Ephesian temples.⁵

The portrait of an evil world ruler demanding worship (Rev. 13:12–15) would certainly be relevant to Christians in Ephesus, who found themselves surrounded by symbols of civil religion. Caesar Augustus had allowed officials in Ephesus to build two temples in his honor, and Caesar Domitian had named Ephesus “guardian” of the imperial cult, making it the foremost center of the imperial cult in Roman Asia.⁶ As you can imagine, this dynamic created a lot of cultural tensions for the Ephesian Christ-followers.

One might assume Christianity struggled to grow in such a hostile environment, but quite the opposite occurred. Nowhere in the first century did the Word of God find better soil and bear more fruit than in Ephesus.

The church in Ephesus experienced a great start, but as the church soon discovered, the goal of any church is not merely having a great start, but to have a lasting impact.

The message to Ephesian believers seems to present a picture of a faithful church. Even though they were situated in the center of pagan and Caesar worship, they were still willing to live as citizens of the newly founded kingdom of God, where Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

In the revelatory letter, Jesus positively noted how his disciples in Ephesus were working hard, enduring many trials, and not tolerating wickedness. Jesus also mentioned they had resisted many false teachers, especially the Nicolaitans. Historians do not know much about the Nicolaitans, but we do know Jesus did not like their beliefs and practices.

Even though the church in Ephesus had a proper theological foundation, there was one very important area missing within the church: the area of love—both the love for God and the love of others.⁷

Apparently, the Christ-followers in Ephesus had lost the core value which first made them into an influential church community.

On the Ball

In most competitive sports, there are two sides to each team: the offense and defense. Both sides are necessary if a team desires to win the game. The offensive side scores the points, and the defensive side protects the scoreboard from further damage.

Likewise, in the church, there is a need for a defensive and offensive team. God's people need to protect the mission from the opposition, and they need to advance God's mission of love down the field.

In the case of the Ephesian church, they had dropped the ball when it came to the offensive movement of love. Instead, the church had begun to adopt a defensive posture, focusing solely on protecting their people from theological error.

Jesus applauded the Ephesian church for not supporting the Nicolaitans. Protecting the church from bad doctrine, faulty beliefs, and immorality is certainly necessary, but Jesus knew if the church in Ephesus did not get on the ball and start playing offense, then they might as well throw in the towel.

Like a good coach, Jesus encouraged his Ephesian team to get back on the playing field, return to the game of eternal life, and put his love first once again.

Reprioritizing

The first time for anything is like an engraving on the soul. I can still remember many of my firsts—my first bicycle, Nintendo, remote-controlled car, girlfriend, kiss, motorcycle, car, house, youth ministry, church plant, and church-planting network.

I can also remember when I first encountered Jesus in a very real way. I was on a spelunking trip with my church's youth ministry. On one particular evening, the leaders started singing worship songs around the campfire. One of the songs God used to touch my heart was Rich Mullins's, "Our God Is an Awesome God." This spontaneous worship session was the first time I truly encountered God, and this moment is forever engraved on my soul. Something awakened in me and I knew God was awesome.

Most Christ-followers can name the time and place where they first encountered the powerful presence of Jesus. They can recall the atmosphere, the message, and the entire enrapturing experience.

In the letter to the church of Ephesus, we see Jesus calling his disciples back to their first experience with him and with one another. We can imagine the feeling they had at their first encounter with meeting a need, adding value to a lost soul, or teaching the truth of God's Word. Yet, over

time, the newness factor wore off and other things began taking priority over the ways of Jesus.

One of the disciplines in life my wife and I try to put into practice is when we first see each other, after a long day of work, we erupt with joy and act like we have not seen each other in weeks. This simple discipline reminds us to not take each other for granted. Due to the complexity of life, it is easy to put my wife on the back burner and forget about her. However, sooner or later, if I have left her on the back burner too long, the smoke rises, and something begins to burn and stink.

Just like all relationships, it's easy to put Jesus on the back burner and forget about him too. This is precisely why Jesus was writing the church in Ephesus. The smoke was rising, and something was beginning to burn and stink. It didn't take long for Jesus to smell the stench, so he called his disciples to revive and return with a deeper kind of love.

Effortless Love

"I love you," is easy to say, but not necessarily easy to do. When we slow down and think about whether or not our love for Jesus is verbalized, we might discover many things, including good things, are competing for our affections. Our friends, hobbies, sporting events, work, ministry, and

even our loved ones can compete with Jesus and a kingdom-oriented lifestyle.

Allowing Jesus to be first and foremost in our life can be quite challenging. In fact, this reality is typically the reason people slowly separate from God's way of life. However, the beautiful thing is, once we begin placing Jesus first and foremost, we can truly love everything else around us. We cannot completely understand and express love until we first experience God's unending love for us. In a unique way, God's unconditional love produces the ability to love ourselves and those around us with a pure and selfless kind of love.

If we are not careful, or if we are like the church in Ephesus, we can quickly fall into the trap of trying to love God and love others out of our own ability. Eventually, these attempts at love will become a form of performing love, and this type of love is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain over the long haul.

The Ephesian church was doing a lot of good things, but they were on the verge of burnout. They were trying to love out of their own willpower, instead of experiencing an empowering and effortless love from the one who shows us how to love well.

In order to help the church in Ephesus see this distinction, Jesus used the image of a "lampstand" to communicate the church's proper posture (Rev. 2:5). The Jewish lampstand is a central image within the book of Revelation. Jesus

is “the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5), and the church is to be the stand which holds up and supports the Light.⁸

When Jesus declared he would remove the Ephesian church’s lampstand, he was also stating he would remove himself, his presence, from their community. Some theologians have understood the removal of the Ephesian church from its place (Rev. 2:5) as an allusion to the silt deposits of the Cayster River which eventually forced the literal relocation of the city.⁹ No longer would the church in Ephesus be influential in the culture at large and within their network of churches. The light would fade out if they chose to not remain disciplined and intentional in their love.

Discipline

We may not like the sound of the word *discipline* very much—it tends to stir up images of schoolwork, diets, or workout routines. However, it is important to know the word *disciple* is the root word for discipline.

Disciples who choose to remain fully devoted to Jesus understand discipline as a good thing—a very good thing. They are willing to put into practice certain life patterns and habits which continually realign their lives to the essence of Jesus.

In order to excel in anything, discipline is required. This is true for athletes, musicians, electricians, accountants, and

disciples of Jesus. Effective discipline is not drudgery—it is delightful. Of course, training has difficult aspects, but the hard work pays off when we bask in the enjoyment of the results. Just watch a master violinist and notice how he or she is not straining to perform, but simply moving to the music.

Discipline comes in the form of training. Training for something is enabling us to do what we haven't yet been able to do by our own direct effort. Trying is not enough. First Timothy 4:7 could be paraphrased this way: "Don't try. Train!" When it comes to our spiritual training, it is important to know our regimen is connecting us with a power, the Holy Spirit, which is much greater than our own willpower.

Discipline also works by helping us develop new habits. We can't be good at any sport or musical expression without developing a number of technical habits with our body.

The spiritual life works the same way. If we want to grow in our relationship with God, we need new habits and practices, engaging our mind and heart with God. This is why it is important to train by meditating on Scripture, praying for our enemies, or reaching out to the poor and oppressed. Engaging in strategic spiritual disciplines will keep us on the right path, moving us in the right direction.

In his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard described several disciplines which can help us remain

committed to Jesus and his loving presence. Willard packages these disciplines in two categories: (1) the disciplines of abstinence—ways of denying ourselves something we want or need in order to make space to focus on and connect with God—and (2) the disciplines of engagement—ways of connecting with God and other people, communicating honestly with them in order to love and be loved.

Take a moment and reflect on Willard's list and consider implementing some new revival habits in your life:

The Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude: Refraining from interacting with other people in order to be alone with God and be found by him.

Silence: Not speaking in order to quiet our whole self and lean into God's presence.

Fasting: Going without food (or something we consistently turn to) for a period of intense prayer.

Sabbath: Doing no work for pay in order to rest in God's person and provision; praying and playing with God and others.

Secrecy: Not making our good deeds or qualities known, letting God or others receive attention and to find our completeness in God alone.

Submission: Humbling ourselves in order to come under the authority, wisdom, and power of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master.¹⁰

The Disciplines of Engagement

Bible Reading: Trusting the Spirit-inspired words of Scripture as our guide, wisdom, and strength for life.

Worship: Praising God for his greatness, goodness, and beauty in words, music, ritual, or silence.

Prayer: Conversing with God about what we're experiencing and doing together.

Soul Friendship: Engaging other disciples of Jesus in uplifting conversations or other spiritual practices.

Personal Reflection: Paying attention to our inner self in order to grow in love for God, others, and self.

Service: Humbly serving God by overflowing with his love and compassion to others, especially those in need.¹¹

To be sure, there is no complete list of spiritual disciplines. Any activity helping a person follow Jesus better might be acceptable. I like to consider fishing with my boys a spiritual discipline.

Jesus himself practiced all of these spiritual disciplines, including fishing with his boys, and he challenged his followers to do what he did. Like Jesus modeled, as we engage in these spiritual disciplines, we must keep in mind they are simply a means to help us be with Jesus and to become more like him. They do not earn us anything. We do the disciplines because we long to be closer to Jesus.

A Natural

In the eighteenth century, a young Russian man wanted to know if it was possible to pray without ceasing, as the Bible commanded. He asked an old monk, who told him truly ceaseless prayer comes in quieting the mind and making the mind one with the heart. He gave the young man these words: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,” and told him to pray them three thousand times a day. When the man completed the task, the monk advised him to pray the same prayer six thousand times, and then later, twelve thousand times a day, until it became almost like breathing.¹²

Now, this spiritual discipline may not sound very realistic to do, but the point of all the disciplines is to do it so much that it flows naturally from our lives and we don’t even have to think about it.

Imagine being Johann Sebastian Bach for a moment. Think about all of those countless hours he spent banging on the keys of his piano and scribbling with his quill, as he composed some of the world's greatest musical textures and cantatas. Bach wasn't born a natural musician—he was simply willing to train himself to the point where everything he did felt natural.

The same should be true about disciples of Jesus. We should be able to train ourselves in the way of Jesus, so everything we do feels natural and people might just say, “That person loves God and loves others so well they kind of remind me of Jesus.”

For the church in Ephesus, victory or conquering (Rev. 2:7) required more than hard work and theological soundness—it required unifying love.¹³ A church where love ceases can no longer function properly as a local expression of Christ's body. Some churches may die from lack of outreach, lack of planning for the emerging generations, or lack of hospitality to visitors, but Jesus wanted the church in Ephesus to know they are on the verge of dying because of their lack of love for God and how they were treating people.

Interestingly, at the end of the letter, Jesus reflected back on the original “tree of life” metaphor (Gen. 3:22) and reminded the church of their source of eternal life. The reward for overcoming and remaining disciplined in unifying love is the privilege of eating from the tree of life

in God's garden or paradise (Rev. 2:7), a familiar image in ancient Judaism.

Jesus seemed to be alluding to the fact that the Ephesian church was on the verge of being removed from the garden of Eden, similar to how Adam and Eve were removed from the garden because of their disobedience. However, if the church in Ephesus returned to loving God and others, they could rest in the promise of enjoying the fruit of God's garden forever.

If we want to experience personal revival and remain in God's garden, let's begin by reaffirming Jesus' words in Matthew 22:37–39: “*Love* the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘*Love* your neighbor as yourself’” (emphasis added).

Discussion Questions

- Make a list of your actions last week. What took priority? What consumed your mind when you first woke up and went to sleep? What might you need to reprioritize in order to keep Christ first and foremost?
- Over time, the church in Ephesus moved from an offensive posture of proactive love to a defensive posture of merely protecting the mission of God. Is your life properly balanced between an offensive posture of love and a defensive posture of protecting the mission of God? Which side do you need to rebalance?
- In your daily life, do you find the essence of Christ intertwined and interlaced within your conversations and daily routines? What spiritual disciplines might you be able to implement in order to develop a consistent devotion for God?

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Chapter 4 Thyatira: Improving and Intentional

1. Craig Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 133.
2. "Ichthys," Wikipedia (accessed January 11, 2021), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ichthys>.
3. In prophetic literature, the imagery of fiery eyes and bronze feet is derived from Daniel 10:6. Frequently, John uses Old Testament imagery to communicate the present dynamics of the New Jerusalem on earth.

4. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 113.
5. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 133.
6. Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, 118.
7. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 133–34.

Chapter 5 Saris: Alive and Alarmed

1. William Barclay, *The Revelation of John: The Daily Study Bible Series* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1976), 138.
2. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 118.
3. Craig Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 144.
4. Ibid.
5. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: Harper One Publishing, 2008), 36.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 37.
8. For a broader understanding of the firstborn theology, see the context surrounding Colossians 1:18.
9. Within this section, I am indebted to the scholarship of historian and theologian N. T. Wright. For an exhaustive

treatment of Jesus' resurrection and second coming, see Wright, *Surprised by Hope*.

10. See William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 2002), 264–65. The picture of the cornerstone is from Psalm 118:22. Originally, the psalmist meant this as a picture of the nation of Israel. It may be that people reject Christ, and refuse him, and seek to eliminate him, but they will yet find that the Christ whom they rejected is the most important person in the world.
11. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 40–41.
12. Ibid.

Chapter 6 Philadelphia: Persevering and Passionate

1. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 124.
2. Craig Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 150.
3. Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, 125.
4. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 150.

5. The term “Satan” does not necessarily represent a single being—it can mean any adversary of God.
6. William Barclay, *The Revelation of John: The Daily Study Bible Series* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1976), 147.
7. Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, 124.
8. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 152.
9. Ibid.

Chapter 7 Laodicea: Rich and Radical

1. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1976), 45.
2. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 131.
3. Ibid.
4. Craig Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 160.
5. Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, 131.
6. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 157.
7. Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World*, 132.
8. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 159.

Conclusion: Consumed and Concerned

1. Julia Duin, *Quitting Church: Why the Faithful Are Fleeing and What to Do About It* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 13. Duin sites George Barna's research on the percentage of people who disconnect from the church each year. Duin also notes how Americans are not disinterested in spiritual matters; they are simply not participating in church life to feed a spiritual interest.

The world is desperate and wondering if those who claim to follow Christ are able to stand the test of time.

Is there anybody willing to weather the storms of life and still honor God? Is there anybody who won't bow down to the idols of our modern culture and stand strong in the face of opposition and persecution? Is there anybody that will allow Jesus to be their guiding authority in life?

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Ed Love is the director of church multiplication for the Wesleyan Church. He has planted two multiplying churches, daughtered multiple church plants, and has provided coaching, training, and resources for church planters. Ed also teaches at Wesley Seminary and Asbury Seminary and is the author of *Fear Not*, *Reclaiming Hope*, *Turn*, and other church-multiplication resources. He and his wife, Emily, reside in Muncie, Indiana, with their three kids, Jennah, Josiah, and Micah.



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ISBN 978-1-62824-930-9



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