



### +INTRODUCTION

If the church in Ephesus was in error for its elevation of, 'truth over love', then the church at Pergamum was in error for its elevation of 'love over truth'. Their commitment to love + tolerance had turned into a weak sentimentality that threatened the very theological and doctrinal purity of the church.

The book of Acts does not mention the founding of this church, though in Acts 16:7-8, it mentions that Paul passed through the region of Mysia, where Pergamum was located, on his second missionary journey. Paul most likely founded this church during his ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19:10) when the gospel was preached throughout Asia.

Pergamum was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia and retained this honor well into the 2nd century. Many scholars have noted that the word Pergamum comes from two Greek words, 'per' meaning 'to elevate', and, 'gamos', meaning 'to marry'. The word carries the idea that, advantage/elevation/progress, is gained by marriage to, 'some-thing'. This letter

pictures a church which is struggling by way of temptation to be married to the world (and what it offers) rather than to Christ.

Pergamum was the center of worship for at least four of the most important pagan cults of the day:

1. Zeus- The god of god's
2. Athena- The goddess of wisdom + peace
3. Dionysus- The god of wine + joy
4. Asclepios- Often referred to as "savior". The son of Apollo and was thought to have been the very first physician. The symbol of Asclepios was the serpent around a poll, as depicted by the logo of the American medical association.

The church at Pergamum was surrounded by a pagan culture, and was tempted to capitulate to the promises offered by those representing these deities.

We're surrounded by an increasingly godless culture. As you study this letter, be attentive to what God wants to teach you through His Word.

### +READ (Revelation 2:12-17)

Read this passage out loud together as a group/family before asking any of the below questions.

### +OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Jesus describes Himself as the "One who has the sharp two-edged sword." What two things is the "sword" symbolic of according to these verses? Ephesians 6:17 & Revelation 2:16

As you read through each of the 7 letters to the churches observe how each follows or deviates from the basic pattern below:

1. Address (what is the letter addressing?)
2. A title/s of Jesus (what title from chapter 1 is repeated here?)
3. Commendation (what does Jesus commend them for?)
4. Criticism (what does Jesus criticize them for?)
5. Counsel (how does Jesus counsel them?)
6. Command (what command/s does Jesus give to them to follow?)
7. Promise (what is promised to them?)

### +APPLICATION

Can you give an example of a time when God's Word convicted your heart of a wrong attitude or action?

In what ways does the world tempt us to compromise with our values and integrity?

Are there areas in your life, in which you are being tempted to entrust yourself to that which promises advantage/elevation and progress, which are not honoring to God. Ask God to search your heart and to show you sin and wrong motives in your heart that you may not be aware of. Allow His Word to penetrate your heart. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Ask those in your group to pray for you, that those present could be an accountability to each other.

### +MEMORY VERSE

Rev 2:17...To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna...



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