



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Teaching Title: Restoring Integrity

Key Scripture: Revelation 3:1–3

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Matthew 5:1–20

Tuesday: Matthew 5:21–48

Wednesday: Matthew 6:1–34

Thursday: Matthew 7:1–12

Friday: Matthew 7:13–29

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Integrity

MEMORY VERSE:

Psalms 101:2 NLT

I will be careful to live a blameless life—when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

In our culture, it's common for people to claim to be Christians without truly reflecting Jesus. Being a Christian is not just about holding a title; it's about living out Jesus' mission with integrity every day. In Revelation 3:1–6, the church in Sardis serves as a clear reminder of this issue. Despite being a prosperous city with a reputation for being alive, Sardis was spiritually dead. Jesus calls the church to wake up, strengthen what remains, and live with integrity. They had an outward appearance of vitality but lacked true spiritual depth, much like many Christians today who present an image of faith without living it authentically. We must look inward, listen attentively, and live obediently to restore both personal and collective integrity within the Church. Don't just talk about it—be about it.

Questions:

Icebreaker—When people come to you for help, what do they typically need?

1. Read Revelation 3:1–6 together as a group. How would you define integrity? Is integrity different than character? How?
2. Why is the reference to "reputation" significant to Sardis? (See Notes)
3. The church in Sardis appeared to be alive on the outside but was spiritually dead on the inside. Is there an area in your life where your outward reputation doesn't match your true reality? If so, where?
4. Jesus doesn't mention persecution, false doctrine, or other suffering in this letter. How can a comfortable life sometimes hinder spiritual growth? Could this be a challenge in our culture today?
5. How does Jesus advise the Christians in Sardis to change? What do you think 'strengthen what little remains' means practically? (See Notes)
6. How does the state of the church in Sardis serve as a warning to us as believers today? What are some

things we can do together to avoid spiritual complacency and live with integrity as a church community?

7. In Revelation 3:3, Jesus tells them to “Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast...” He is telling them to remember the gospel they heard and received. Why is it important to keep preaching the gospel to ourselves, even as Christians? How does this help keep our faith alive?

Notes

Question 2: Here is some helpful background information about the church in Sardis:

- At the time Jesus spoke these words to John, the ancient city of Sardis had seen its best days and had started to decline. Yet it was a wealthy city. Sardis was situated at the junction of several important roads and trade routes. The connection between Sardis and money—easy money—was well known in the ancient world.
- It is of interest to note that the first coinage ever to be minted in Asia Minor was minted in Sardis in the days of Croesus. Sardis was the place where modern money was born.
- Sardis was also a city well known for its softness and luxury. It had a well-deserved reputation for apathy and immorality.
- Much like Ephesus, Sardis had a large temple to the mother goddess, Cybele. This mother goddess was honored and worshipped with all kinds of sexual immorality and impurity.

Question 5: Revelation 3:2—“*Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.*”

- Notice: I find your actions don't meet the requirements of my God
- Other translations: “I have not found your actions complete in the sight of my God.” (ESV)
- The Greek word *pleroo* - (play-ro'-o) means full or complete, to be complete
 - The idea here is of completeness, of wholeness
 - Speaking of integrity = The state of being whole and undivided

Think of it this way: the root of 'integrity' is 'integer.' An integer is a whole number, as opposed to a fraction.

- A life of integrity is a life that's whole—where your actions align consistently, instead of being fractured (like acting one way at work or school, and another way with a different group of friends).

Digging Deeper

Why the reference to soiled garments in Revelation 3:4?

“Inscriptions in Asia Minor indicate that many temples barred worshipers with soiled garments, whose entry would insult the deity. White robes were worn by priests (and many other worshipers) in the Jerusalem temple, worshipers of most deities (e.g. Isis, Apollo, Artemis), celebrants in cult festivals for the emperor and so on.”

What is the Book of life mentioned in Revelation 3:5–6?

“All Greek and Roman cities had official rolls of citizens, to which new citizens could be added; in at least some cities, expelled citizens would be removed. (Sardis, with its ancient history of record-keeping, would be familiar with this practice.) The biblically literate, however, would catch an allusion to Exodus 32:32–33. The 'book of life' appears in the Old Testament and figures prominently in Jewish apocalyptic (see also Philippians 4:3).” (Read the passage in Exodus to understand more.)

—Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. 735