



The Church Family

May 13, 2023



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20, 21).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 123, 124

CONQUERING COMPLACENCY

There is not much left today, but Laodicea must have been quite a city. It is off the beaten path, and few tourists visit the site today. Very little excavation has been done. In its prime Laodicea was home to nearly 150,000 people. It was an important trade center of Asia Minor, an imperial city famous for the glossy black wool manufactured there.

Laodicea was an extremely wealthy banking center. When it was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, its citizens refused financial help to rebuild the city. The proud Laodiceans erected it out of their own resources. The city was also advanced in the healing arts. Its medical practitioners developed a well-known salve for the eyes.

Revelation’s message to Laodicea reached this prosperous place toward the end of the first century. The letter addresses a spiritual problem that afflicts almost all of us at one time or another.

The letter begins with Christ’s diagnosis of the problem. He says, “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:15, 16).

Jesus uses a metaphor to describe a spiritual problem. Lukewarm water is neither hot nor cold. It’s not hot enough to provide a good bath. It’s not cold enough to be good drinking water. It’s something you instinctively spew out of your mouth.

What is the Doctor talking about? Complacency, indifference? The Laodiceans weren’t hot. They didn’t have a passion for knowing God. But they weren’t cold, either. They hadn’t rejected God. They weren’t exploring the alternative. They were lukewarm. They had just enough spiritual life to make them comfortable, but not enough to move them anywhere.

What is the real answer to spiritual complacency? How do you rise out of spiritual lethargy? You begin by taking a step in faith.

Stretch past your comfortable boundaries. Set aside a specific time each day for prayer. Choose a book of the Bible and read it through. Commit passages of Scripture to memory. Take a new witnessing challenge in the name of Jesus. You break out of spiritual complacency by taking some definite action that stretches you to the limit. What spiritual challenge will you accept today?

—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground*, p. 312

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read 2 Timothy 2:23, 24.
- » Imagine that in your church you are witnessing a state of spiritual lethargy. It could be that spiritual self-sufficiency keeps people from getting involved actively in mission. Let’s suppose that many of the people in the congregation attend church only to receive spiritual blessings and services. What are the dangers of going to church simply to be entertained?
- » What could you do to contribute to a solution? How could you be a change agent? How would service and active involvement help church members wake up and move away from spiritual complacency?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Read Matthew 28:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6; Colossians 3:10-15.
- » Unity—harmony, agreement, solidarity—working together toward a common goal. Our goal and mission is saving souls. If we focus on Christ and live so that others see Him in us, we will not be looking at the differences between us. God wants unity in our homes and in our churches.
- » How is unity displayed in your church?

- » How does your family, your church, handle differences?

- » Fill in the missing words. Texts are from the New King James Version.

“For as the body is _____ and has _____ members, but all the _____ of that one _____, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by _____ Spirit we were _____ into one body—whether _____ or _____, whether _____ or _____—and have _____ been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the _____ is not _____ member but _____” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Galatians 3:27-29.
- » The Bible says that all the members of God’s church are supposed to work together as smoothly as the parts of a human body. The trouble is that in real life we see the feet arguing with the eyes, the ears insisting they can smell better than the nose—even right and left hands thumb-wrestling with each other! It’s not easy being part of a church that includes lots of different kinds of people.
- » Working together starts with accepting differences. We’re not all going to think or act alike. We accept people better when we understand them.
- » Maybe your church includes a lot of people from different racial or cultural groups—maybe even people from different countries who speak different languages. The more you learn about another person’s culture, the better you’ll understand where they’re coming from.
- » The same thing goes for younger and older people in the church. Senior citizens may not understand what it’s like being a teenager today. And you may not realize how different things were when they grew up, and how much that shapes the way they look at the world. Taking a little time to talk to each other and learn about differences can help all of you in the process to build positive relationships.
- » “Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God” (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96).

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read Psalm 133:1.
- » The church is made up of individuals and all the differences that each individual brings. Each of these individuals is a child of God and is loved so much that He sent His only Son to redeem them. You are one of His children. Redeemed. Loved. Just as each part of the body has a job to do, so do you. Your job, as a child of God, is to share His love with your family, your church, your neighborhood, your world. Think about and then answer the following questions.

What part of the body do you relate to? Are you an ear because you like to listen? A hand or foot because you like to help others? Or are you a mouth because you like to talk, read, or speak to others?

What are some things I can do to bring my church closer together?

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

» Match the phrase with the text. All verses are from the New King James Version.

John 13:34, 35 Ephesians 4:4-6 1 Corinthians 3:3 2 Timothy 2:23, 24
Psalm 133:1 Romans 15:1, 2 2 Corinthians 5:17 Ephesians 4:31, 32

- 1. "... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all ..."
- 2. "... where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you ..."
- 3. "... a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all ..."
- 4. "... that you love one another; as I have loved you ..."
- 5. "... he is a new creation; old things have passed away ..."
- 6. "... how good and how pleasant it is ..."
- 7. "... be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another ..."
- 8. "... and not to please ourselves ..."

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-20, 27.
- » Review the memory text.
- » You’re part of the church—part of Christ’s body. You may be an eye, clearly seeing what’s going on. You may be an ear, excellent at listening to both sides of the story. You may be a hand, ready to help in practical ways. You may be the tongue—quick to say the words everyone needs to hear.
- » You have a role to play in helping the church work together smoothly. Your part might be reaching out to someone who’s new and doesn’t fit in yet. You may have to try to understand and get along with someone who really irritates you. You may be called on to pitch in and help with a project.
- » Christianity is about your relationship with God—one on one. When you join God’s kingdom, you join His family. Growing closer to God also means growing closer to God’s people, learning to understand each other, forgiving each other, and working together.
- » “Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running to the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another. Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action” (Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 179).