

Week 1

Perseverance/Endurance

- a. God commands us to endure and persevere until He returns. Combining this with faithfulness in God, will help us hold fast and resist Satan while we wait for His return. He commands us to hold on to what we have -Jesus! Through him we can endure all that the devil and the world throws at us.
- b. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he is describing why the sufferings and groanings are worth enduring and that our ultimate hope is in the return of Jesus. Paul is explaining that if we endure and hold fast than Jesus will return and help us. This goes along with what John wrote in Revelation but in a relatable way of how they were currently suffering at that point, waiting for His ultimate return. Paul also reminds us that we have the Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness and intercedes for us.
- c. Oh heavenly Father, help me keep your commands to endure and remain faithful to You. Jesus, You are the true faithful witness, who shows me how to remain faithful and strong, to resist the devil and hold fast to what You have given me. Help me rely more on you and persevere through what the devil and the world throws at me. You are the Originator of God's creation, You have proven Your faithfulness and endurance through Your worldly trials, help that be an example to me and guide me in my troubles. Lord, help me remain faithful and by your side, help me not be led astray but to hold fast to You, Jesus.

Week 2

B

In Rev. 1:4 and 1:8, John is introducing who he is talking about and this message comes from the same Lord God that is the Creator that the Jews have known since the beginning. He is reminding them that God who was (since the beginning, God of Moses & Abraham), is still their God and He is still to come. In 4:8, we get a glimpse of what the throne room in heaven looks like. Seeing how God is worshiped in heaven can show us how we can also worship Him here on earth. In verses 11:17 and 16:5, John now refers to God: "who are and who were", possibly referencing that the destruction of Satan has started and "who is to come" is coming now as the trumpets are blown and the bowls are poured out. So God is now referred to as "who are and who were" because He has come, it also seems to be the plural form now, possibly including Jesus and The Spirit with Him. In 11:17, as the seventh trumpet is blown we see 24 elders face down and worshipping God, thanking Him. As they only reference Him "who are and who were", they also state that He has begun to reign. Again, referring to "who is to come" is happening now. In Rev 16:5, the angels are praising God as the river and springs turn to blood. At first it seems harsh, but they continue to say that He has judged these things and they deserve it. They are praising Him for carrying out His word.

Being able to recognize the inner connections in the biblical text will help me look for connections in past bible books and within the book to help me fully understand the message the author is trying to get across to me. Also, seeing how it changes in Revelation shows me that John is trying to clue us in that the time he is writing about is the reign of Jesus, the time we are waiting for.

Week 3

1. I see many similarities between 1st century believers and Christians today. The Nicolaitans seem very similar to many Christians today. Trying to please and belong in our culture while still trying to be a Christian. While it is stated multiple times in the bible that we are currently living in this world doesn't mean we should be of this world. We should not compromise on what the Bible calls us to do and stand up for. We have to remember what Jesus taught us, and put these teachings before what is currently accepted in society. Many of times this will have us going against what culture thinks we should do, but we should do this with love and grace, not condemning and hatred toward others.
2. This description would possibly remind them that He is walking among them and that they are His people. That He is connected to them as the Lord of the Stars (angels) assigned to them. That He has picked these 7 churches as the holy of holys and that they need to heed to His warning.
3. Lord, I am reminded that we need to submit to You and Your word. That I need to repent from the wrongs I have committed. Please help me move away from my sins and stay strong against temptation. Lord, my spirit is willing but my flesh is weak. Help me with this. Give me the strength I need to conquer any sin that comes to mind today. Lord, help me be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. Search my heart, and show me any hidden sins within me, and help me conquer these. Lord, You are my God, my rock and my Redemeer.

Week 4

1. I think the church is in a similar situation that Smyrna Christians were in. Having a prosperous society that are easily swayed by what society is worshipping at that moment while still calling themselves believers. This is very much like today, where many call themselves Christians but go about life just like the rest of society. Jesus' letter to Smyrna should be a big reminder of how we need to stay away from the "synagogue of Satan" and keep our focus on worshipping the true God.
Pergamum is also having trouble drawing a line between society life and how a Christian should be. This can be a daily struggle depending on how much I allow myself to be immersed into culture. By keeping my first thoughts and moments of the day to Jesus, this gives me a great start. But I have to continue this through my day and not get distracted by the things on my phone or even political agendas that are just distractions from who I should be focusing on throughout my day.
2. A big thing for the community of believers that we need to repent of is judgement of others. As a church and individuals we are usually known for looking down at others because of their mistakes and sins. While I know this isn't the case with all Christians at all, but overall this is something we need to repent from and turn back to loving our neighbors and showing more grace than judgement. I think if this image was changed of the church, the church would be more inviting to others.
3. The Spirit usually nudges in thoughts of what we are doing is wrong or having bad feelings about what we are about to do. When I am more tired, I tend to resist the Spirit and give in to what I

know is wrong. When I am out of patience and want some time alone, I will resist those thoughts of being slow to anger with my kids or even my husband.

4. For the church to be faithful to Christ, there needs to be more accountability within the church. With each of us having someone to hold us accountable to keep us faithful to Christ. Following the steps of repenting; Recognition, redirection and reorientation in order for us to go in the right direction. Not acting like all is perfect but being more honest with each other would help us move forward in the right direction.

“Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will absolutely not be harmed by the second death.” Rev 2:10-11. This stood out to me that I need to take my faith to the next level, while it may not come to the point of death, I pray that I will have the boldness to grow in my faith and to overcome.