**1. Motivate**

What strange philosophy or common misconception (urban myth, old wives’ tale, etc.) have you heard of?

* excessive morning sickness means your baby will be a girl
* don’t swim too soon after a meal or you will get cramps and not be able to swim enough to keep from drowning
* if you shave often, your beard or hair will grow back faster, darker, coarser
* sitting too close to the TV will make you go blind
* feed a cold, starve a fever
* if you swallow your chewing gum, it will get stuck in your appendix and/or stay in your stomach 7 years
* coffee stunts your growth
* cracking your knuckles can cause arthritis
* eating carrots will improve eyesight

A video introduction is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_wdb720as>

If no Wi-Fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/66dkpc9w>

* being chilled will give you a cold

**2. Transition**

Most of these concepts are puzzling … some are actually dangerous.

* There is little truth involved.
* Contrasted to biblical truth about Christ, where there is no room for compromise,

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 A Bold Witness for Christ

Listen for a commendation.

Revelation 2:12-13 (NIV) "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live--where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city--where Satan lives.

What does it mean that Christ has a "sharp, double-edged sword"?

* Recall the words of Hebrews 4:12, “The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword …”
* His message to the church is powerful
* His words go deep into our lives
* What God has to say to us cuts to the heart of the matter

For what did He commend them? What statements and what actions demonstrated the depth of their convictions about Him as the Christ?

* they remain true to Jesus, even in the midst of evil
* they did not renounce their faith when persecuted
* they remained true when one of their number was martyred

How did He characterize the city?

* a place where Satan has his throne
* where Satan lives

In what ways could it be said that Satan lives in your city?

* presence of drugs
* murders happen often
* some cities have corrupt leadership
* human trafficking happens
* there may even be Satan worship
* some entertainment is evil
* our culture continues to grow more anti-Christian

What are some temptations Christians face living in a non-Christian culture?

* we are tempted to worry
* we are afraid of reprisals against taking a stand for our Faith
* we can be tempted to “go along to get along” in areas of alcohol, or business ethics
* temptations of romantic entanglements that violate our marriage
* efforts to beat the tax system by receiving payments “under the table”
* cut corners, ignore certain legalities in business

3.2 Don’t Tolerate False Teaching

Listen for a condemnation.

Revelation 2:14-15 (NIV) Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

What complaint does the Lord have against the Christians at Pergamos? What two specific examples of their tolerance does He cite?

* people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam
* Balaam suggested that the Israelites could be enticed to sin by too close an involvement in idol worship
* he also suggested ways to involve them in sexual immorality
* and the people had tolerated the false teachings of a group called the Nicolaitans

How can we determine whether a teaching or teacher is false?

* how does it compare or contrast to Scripture
* if it doesn’t agree with God’s Word it is false teaching
* if there is nothing specific in the Bible about what someone is teaching, what are Biblical principles that speak to those concepts

What kinds of dangers or consequences arise from false teaching?

* people become lead astray
* the church could end up being just a “religious club”
* we could be no different in our standards than the world
* we end up involved in sinning against the Lord
* we would no longer have a positive witness

What "little" sins do we tend to allow into our lifestyle and habits?

* a sinful vocabulary
* wanting to please people instead of Jesus
* lying (“shading” the truth)
* gossip to put others down
* not acting in faith – when we have problems we go to Google instead of to God
* anger, fear, despair
* act to please ourselves, not God
* pursue entertainment that leads us away from Godly living

What is the best way to deal with Christians (whether real or false) who circulate unbiblical ideas?

* reject the ideas
* counsel with them as kindly as possible
* may require a confrontation
* counter with God’s Truth

What are some potential problems for churches that discipline members publicly?

* accused of not being “tolerant”
* accused of racism or xenophobia
* possible lawsuits
* can precipitate other people leaving the church in anger

What should it mean to us that Jesus doesn’t overlook sin, even if we are doing lots of good deeds?

* our faith is not one of stacking up good deeds on the scales to counter our sin failures
* we are called to honor Christ in all we do
* as believers we can mess up our lives by disobeying Christ
* Jesus will still be in your life, but when we disregard His rule in your life, things will go awry – we are out of fellowship with Him

3.3 God Honors Unwillingness to Compromise

Listen for a promise to overcomers.

Revelation 2:16-17 (NIV) Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

What admonition did the Lord give to the church at Pergamos?

* repent
* turn away from sin,
* turn to following and obeying God

What does repentance have to do with following Christ?

* when we fail (sin) we need to confess it … agree with God that it is sin
* we need to turn away from that attitude or action
* and turn TO Jesus – receiving His forgiveness and His strength to do the right thing
* this can/should be a daily attitude/practice in our lives

What two objects are used to describe the promise of the Lord to those who overcome tolerance of evil and choose spiritual victory? Note the possible meanings.

* hidden manna
	+ God’s provision
	+ God’s bounty
* a white stone with a new name written on it
	+ a symbol of acquittal (opposite of being “black-balled”)
	+ symbol of invitation to the heavenly banquet
	+ symbol of the new character of the believer

What does conquering or overcoming look like in our daily lives?

* demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit … love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control
* involved in the ministry of the church – ministering to others, spreading the Good News
* growing in Christian attitudes and actions
* basing your life on God’s Truth
* communicating daily with God – reading God’s Word, speaking to God in prayer

How can we resist the influence of the world around us?

* fill our minds with God’s Truth
* keep our eyes on Jesus
* be in moment-by-moment communication with God
* walk with God throughout the whole day – no straying, no side trips

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Pray.

* We live in a culture full of compromise.
* Pray, asking God to strengthen you to stand strong in the face of compromise.
* Pray also for your church to never compromise in matters of biblical truth.

Evaluate.

* List ways people are tempted to compromise their faith or tolerate false teachings.
* Do a self-assessment to identify any ways you might have compromised on biblical teaching.
* Repent and determine to stand with Christ.

Confront.

* If you know someone who is stepping into false teaching or compromise, lovingly confront that person and urge him or her to come back to the truth of Christ.
* Let God use you in the life of another, but it’s important to do so by “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

Cryptogram Puzzle

Don’t tell anyone, but this is my disguise. I received this coded message in the sewer under the streets of the capitol of Andslandsvir. The partial key above is available to you, but I don’t have access. Use this key to figure out the letters that go in the blanks. If you’re stuck go to <https://tinyurl.com/66dkpc9w>. You’ll find additional Family Activities of intrigue there as well.

