

PRESSURE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE APOCALPSE

QUESTION: How do you handle pressure?

The top three pressures I am dealing with everyday are:

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|----|----|----|

TODAY'S QUESTION: Will I be victorious over the pressures of life?

SERIES QUESTION: Why the revelation?

- ▶ JESUS IS BIGGER THAN ALL OF OUR _____!
- > This book is filled with tension, stress, and pictures of pressure.

SERIES THEME: We are the people of the apocalypse living everyday in the revelation of Jesus Christ

REVIEW: Revelation is the Greek word "apocalypse".

- > To pull back the curtain.
- > To suddenly open up what is hidden or closed.
- > To break through into a greater vision or reality.

TODAY'S TEXT: Revelation 2:8-11

- > Every Church receives a revelation of Jesus specific to their everyday needs, failures, challenges, and keys to victory.
- > Every day we must live in the revelation of the One who is The First and The Last.
- > The Church in Smyrna is living under crushing pressure.
- ▶ The Greek word literally means pressure.
- ▶ Jesus predicted this pressure!

• John 16:33

TODAY'S THEME: We are the Church of the apocalypse _____ the pressures of life every day, in the revelation of Jesus Christ

□ I. JESUS IS MY FIRST AND LAST _____, EVERY DAY – v. 9

A. SMYRNA CHURCH

- > Facing the everyday pressure of living in a _____ city.
- > Revelation shows the wicked _____ and the filthy Babylon of _____ and commerce because this is the everyday pressure on the followers of Jesus.

B. KINGSWAY CHURCH

- > Facing the everyday _____ of living in a wealthy city.
 - Everyday there is pressure to put your trust in the false _____ god and _____ wealth.
- ▶ Having more doesn't mean less stress!
 - The more we have, the more stress we feel.

Question: How are you handling the money stress?

- ▶ Everyday, we are told to worry and be anxious about our money.

Question: What did Jesus tell the poor Christians in Smyrna? • v.9

- ▶ The people who trust Jesus everyday are _____!
- > Trusting in Jesus sets us _____ from a poverty mentality and _____ spirit.

• I Timothy 6:6-10 • Ephesians 1:18 • II Corinthians 8:9

□ II. JESUS IS MY FIRST AND LAST _____, EVERY DAY – v. 9

A. SMYRNA CHURCH

- > Facing the everyday pressure to _____ Jesus as Lord.
- ▶ To get by in Smyrna, you had to compromise and confess that _____ was Lord.
 - Many Jews (false Christians) compromised.
 - True believers could not and would not compromise.
 - Their faithfulness _____ the compromisers.
 - Jesus calls compromisers "the synagogue of Satan".
- ▶ To compromise your faith is to be a _____ of Satan!

B. KINGSWAY CHURCH

- > Facing the everyday pressure to deny Jesus as Lord.
- ▶ There is a constant pressure to bow our knee to false values and beliefs.

Questions: Is Jesus Lord - First and Last? Are there other ways to God and other truths?

- ▶ Victory is sure for those who stay _____ to Jesus!

• v.10 b

□ III. JESUS IS MY FIRST AND LAST _____, EVERY DAY - v10a

A. SMYRNA CHURCH

> Facing the everyday pressure of _____ attacks.

▶ There was extreme pressure from the devil!

Question: Why does the devil attack Christians?

Answer: Because he is a poor _____!

> Revelation reveals his defeat! • 12:12b

B. KINGSWAY CHURCH

> Facing the everyday pressure of the satanic attacks.

▶ The devil's attacks are _____.

- He does everything he can to _____ our problems.

- He attacks our _____ points in our _____ times.

• I Peter 5:8.9

> Satan attacks the Church because we are the _____ of his defeat and Jesus' victory!

CONCLUDING QUESTION: Will I be victorious in death?

> We all face the everyday real pressure of death and dying.

▶ THE QUESTION ISN'T WHETHER WE ARE GOING TO DIE BUT ARE WE GOING TO DIE TWICE!

> Physical death is sure for all of us. • Hebrews 9:27

> The final judgment is either eternal living or eternal dying. • v.11

Which pressure do you want to live with?

~ LIFEGROUP STUDY GUIDE ~

Discuss how pressure and stress can be our friend. - I Peter 1:6, 7

"No pressure, no diamonds." "Character is revealed by pressure."

"Courage is grace under pressure."

- E. Hemmingway

Discuss what happens when physical, mental, and spiritual stress become our enemies.

Read **Revelation 2:8-11**.

Note: "Affliction" can be translated as crushing pressure.

> What pressure was the Church in Smyrna dealing with?

> When we are dealing with money stress how might the words, "I know your affliction and poverty – yet you are rich!" (v.9a) help us?
(See Ephesians 1:17, 18; I Timothy 6:6-10; II Corinthians 8:9)

> How are we being pressured to compromise our faith?

> What does Jesus promise us if we remain faithful? - v.10b

> Is spiritual pressure from Satan real? How, when, and why does the devil attack us? How do we stand against him?
(See Revelation 12:10-12 and I Peter 5:6-9)

> How do we handle the pressure of death and dying? How does the reference to a "second death" help us? - v.11
(See Revelation 20:6, 14, 15)

"Those who are born once, die twice. Those who are born twice, die once."
- E.V. Hill

Read **John 16:33** and pray with each other about the stress and pressure you are facing.