

THE VIRTUES OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION

A. Revelation 1:4, 12-13, 20

In its massive apocalyptic message, we must not forget the Revelation was initially addressed to seven churches in Asia.

B. Revelation 2:1-3:22

Those congregations each received a personal message from Jesus, mostly filled with warnings regarding His disappointment in them. Let us learn from them.

I. LABOR

A. Revelation 2:2-3

The church in Ephesus was recognized by Christ for its *“labor.”*

B. 1st Corinthians 15:58

A church's work must always *“abound”* for such *“labor”* is not wasted.

C. 1st Thessalonians 1:2-3

“Work of faith” and *“labor of love”* is what a church is remembered for with thanksgiving.

D. Revelation 14:13

The end result of labor is *“rest”* and blessing.

II. PATIENCE

A. Revelation 2:2-3, 9, 13, 19; 3:8, 10

The Ephesian congregation was commended for its patience and perseverance. The church in Thyatira went through tribulation. The church in Pergamos held fast to the name of Christ. The church in Thyatira was also remembered for patience. The Philadelphia congregation persevered and never denied Jesus.

B. Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4

It is patience through adversity that develops, strengthens, and proves our character.

C. Hebrews 10:36-39

Our salvation, receiving God's promise, depends on endurance.

D. Galatians 6:9

Never let fatigue set in!

III. INTOLERANCE TOWARD EVIL

A. Revelation 2:2

The Ephesian church was saluted by the Lord for not bearing with evil.

B. Romans 12:9

Evil must be hated. How can we claim to love God while not hating what offends Him. The evil that would separate us from the Blessed One must be despised!

C. Ephesians 5:11

Our duty is clear – to expose, rather than embrace, the works of darkness.

IV. TESTED APOSTOLIC CLAIMANTS

A. Revelation 2:2

Another quality the Lord approved in the church of Ephesus was its willingness to test those who claimed to be apostles.

B. 2nd Corinthians 11:13-15

It is predictable behavior on the part of Satan to deceive souls through the pretense of moral uprightness and religious authority.

C. Acts 1:15-26; 1st Corinthians 15:8

The only time there was ever a vacancy in the apostleship, the qualifications were specified and only two candidates qualified. The primary qualification

was witnessing the resurrection of Jesus and no one has done that since the apostle Paul.

V. LOVE

A. Revelation 2:19

Jesus commended the church in Thyatira for its love.

B. Hebrews 10:24

The very purpose a church has in assembling together is to encourage love!
When we neglect attendance, love is lacking.

VI. SERVICE

A. Revelation 2:19

The church in Thyatira was known by the Lord for its *“service.”*

B. Galatians 5:13

Service toward each other is a requirement.

C. John 13:3-17

Jesus taught service by example, showing that none of us should regard ourselves with superiority.

VII. FAITH

A. Revelation 2:19

The Thyatira congregation was also acknowledged for its *“faith.”*

B. 1st Thessalonians 1:8

The faith of a church should be spread abroad, proclaiming the gospel everywhere.