



The True Good Life

Monthly Focus
Questioning the
Status Quo

Week 4
Devotion

Scripture Passage: Revelation 2:12 - 17

Materials Needed – White Stones, Small Pieces of Cloth (small enough to look like clothing labels), Permanent Markers

Read through the Scripture passage and ask your students to discuss what stood out to them.

Activity:

This passage talks about a specific people group and names a few specific people. Here are a few details to help uncover some of the mystery of the passage.

Antipas – Antipas was possibly the first Christian martyr in Asia and he was killed in Pergamum. His persecutors had the label attached to them as “Satan.” This is one possible reason why the author says that Satan has his throne in Pergamum. The other reason given for the label placed on Pergamum as the place where Satan lives is that the city was once a small kingdom where there was a famous temple to the god Asklepius, the Greek god of healing, which was symbolized by a snake.

Part of the passage talks about the Israelites being enticed to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality. Talk to your students for a minute about whether or not this passage could tie in with the rest of the months’ lessons. Are there teachers or people who entice the American population to sin? If so, who are they and how do they do it? What are their devices?

What is the message to the members of the church in Pergamum? What is the gift to “him who overcomes”? Is it worth it? Discuss for a while with your students what hidden manna is.

In Exodus 16, the Israelites grumble against God because they don’t have food to eat – meat or bread. The Lord tells Moses that He will provide what they are asking for, meat in the evening and bread every morning. That evening quail came, and the Israelites had meat and the next morning when the dew disappeared there were white flakes like frost on the ground. The people were to gather what they needed (an omer for each person) and nothing more. Everyone had what they needed. The manna when made was like honey flavored wafers. When the Israelites finally got that they couldn’t hoard the manna the Lord commanded Moses to collect an omer of manna to be kept for generations to come so that they would remember the deliverance the Lord brought for the Israelites in leaving Egypt.

In John, Jesus calls himself bread from heaven. He is the gift of life as well as sustenance. Christ is the deliverance each of us need. He is the hidden manna the author of Revelation is talking about.

John 6:31-58 (New International Version)

31Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’[a]”

32Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34 “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”

35Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

The faithfulness of those who live in Pergamum is the value that emerges from this message. They have a firm commitment to what is right and a stubborn refusal to compromise in order to achieve respectability and status in Roman society or any other society.

Their faithfulness is to Christ and the labels he gives. The last part of Revelation 2:17 talks about those who overcome receiving a white stone with a new name written on it, known only by Him and the one who receives it.

Help the students understand the depth of that gift that Christ will give to each one of us when we meet him face to face. We will receive a new name – one that Christ gives and is known only to us. What kind of acceptance into heaven is that?

When parents give their children names, they think long and hard about them. What will this name say about my child? Will my child be ridiculed because of this name? Will the initials spell something strange or something that may cause teasing? Will my child be able to live up to this name?



How much thought do you think Christ has put into the name that will be on your white stone? How much weight does a name carry? What are the names that you are carrying that aren't yours?

At this time, have each student grab a few of the small scraps of paper. Tell them that these are the labels that they wear – not necessarily brand names but the labels that others give them. Are there some they'd like to get rid of? Ask your students to write them down – one per label.

Part of being labeled also deals with allowing others to label you. Do you believe the things other people say about you? If so, why? Is there something in that label that you should repent of as those in Revelation were called to do?

If the labels others have given you are untrue, will you choose to release them? Will you choose to be free from them?

When your students seem to have pondered their labels and written them down, invite them to lay them down. You may want to permanently get rid of them by burning them. You may want to have them rip them to shreds. You may want them to nail them to a cross. The choice for how they free themselves from those labels is yours.

In return for those labels, have them choose a white stone. This one won't have a name on it but it can be a constant reminder of what is to come, what they can look forward to. It can be a reminder to them of a way they can live above the status quo and keep from succumbing to the messages the media sends us about what we need in order to live the "good life."

Refine – Ask the students to consider how they can continue to live above the media and cultural influences that will come at them this week. What is one way they can avoid being drawn into the idea of what the media calls the "good life?"

Pursue – This week encourage the students to spend their devotional time searching the Bible for the names God calls his people in both the Old and New Testament. You may want to show them the dictionary or concordance in the back of their Bibles. This task may be overwhelming so you may want to break it down so that each student only gets a chapter or book to look through. When you have a chance in next week's meeting, ask them what they discovered and perhaps what that might mean to them.

Unite – Encourage the teens to pray with each other, to share (if they're comfortable) with a friend the labels they laid down and how they intend to overcome the lies that society sells them. Have a time of prayer at the end where you allow any student who wants to pray the opportunity.