

the **GOOD** the **BAD** and the **UGLY!**

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The title of this newsletter may bring different visions to your mind of what the good, the bad and the ugly actually mean. It may remind you of the movie if you are a western buff. However, it does make a bold statement, there is a difference between that which is good, that which is bad and that, which is ugly.

LUKEWARM!

When this title came up in my mind, I remembered Revelation 3:15-16 where it makes the following statement. "*know thy works. that thou art neither cold nor hot: would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*"

God is bringing to the church in Laodicea a strong warning. Their works were not good; they had become self-sufficient, and did not recognize their condition. We all should take heed at these scriptures and examine ourselves to make sure we have not slipped into a lukewarm condition and lifestyle.

WE MUST TURN FROM SIN!

The "good" is one who is hot, the "bad" is one who is cold and the "ugly" is one who is lukewarm. Who is the one represented by the word "hot"? God's word presents this person as one who loves Him with all his h

heart, mind, soul and strength; this speaks of relationship. While on the far extreme, the one called "cold" is pictured as one who is far from God and who is not drawing near to or acknowledging God in any way, shape or form. Now we come to the one called, "lukewarm". God says this one He will vomit out of His mouth. Listen this is important, why would God do this, because of sin. These scriptures seem to place us in a precarious place if we do not repent of our sins. True repentance is the changing of our hearts producing a change in our lifestyle. We must turn from our self-sufficient, stale, and stagnate condition and determine to keep ourselves from this sin. Remember that if hot we are in a good place with God; if cold then there is hope for redemption. However, if lukewarm we are in danger of separation from God.

We must never lose site of an important truth. At no time in these three descriptions does God stop loving us. We can make choices to do this or that and even go against God but it does not stop or change His love for us. God wants to bless and prosper us. God loves us so much, He warns us to keep us close to Him, exemplified by the strength of these verses.

MIXTURE & COMPROMISE

What could cause us to become a lukewarm Christian? To comprehend this lukewarm condition we must look at two terms very closely. They are mixture and compromise. To clearly understand what a mixture is we need to keep the word "lukewarm" in our minds. If you take hot water and cold water and mix the two you end up with lukewarm water. It is not hot, it is not cold. It has been altered, changed from its original state. If "hot" is the pure state, the state in which God is pleased then lukewarm is a mixture and contaminated. As believers, we cannot afford to put anything into our lives that would cause us to become tainted or contaminated. Yet daily we find the possibility that we are mixing the ways of the world in our lives and with the things of God. Our life in God is a faith-filled progression, a journey. With all our diligence and effort, we must stay firmly centered on the narrow path He has set before us.

Scripture relates in II Corinthians 6:17-7:1 "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch (partake) not the unclean [thing]; and] will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" Separation and holiness is the path that God set before us so that we can receive His blessings. Notice God said that if we do these things He would receive us. The word receive in this verse means, to hand out favor. It is our responsibility to keep ourselves cleansed from all sin and mixture.*

COME OUT FROM THEM!

The commandment in these verses is to come out from among them. Who are they? They are the unbelievers and their system of doing things. We are to be in this world, but not of it. Do not be unequally yoked (joined) with unbelievers. God says touch not the unclean thing. What is God talking about? When we embrace unbelievers doctrines, thoughts, and ways that are contrary to the Word of God we are touching the unclean thing. These things will pollute, defile and contaminate our hearts and minds causing our faith to weaken and our warfare to be ineffective against the devil's attacks. How much input from unbelievers do we take as gospel. Matthew 6:33 says, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.*" The kingdom of God is His way of doing

things; His righteousness is what we need to live right and holy lives.

In Joshua 6: 17 - Joshua 7:26 we find the story of what happened when one of God's people touched an unclean thing. Achan disobeyed God's Word and brought an accursed thing into his tent. It brought defeat to Israel in battle and brought destruction to Achan and his family. We would do well to cleanse our homes of any unclean or accursed object. The sin of touching the unclean has caused this nation much sorrow. Equally important is the cleansing of our hearts and minds by repentance of our sins. (II Corinthians 7:1) Change begins with you and me.

God's laws have not changed because we have advanced technologically and some have adopted liberal views and values. Anything not of God will bring destruction and death into our lives, yet we touch (partake) of them with little or no thought of the consequences. Partake simply means to indulge in, to participate, and to share in. Remember participation indicates acceptance and agreement.

COMPROMISE!

The term "HOT" is one sold out to God completely. He is fully persuaded; has a no turning back mentality concerning his lifestyle or dedication to God and His plan. The term lukewarm describes someone who has become distasteful to God, by wanting the best of the world and the best of God. This cannot be! The Word of God plainly says we cannot serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24) We cannot eat at the Lords table and the table of the devil. (I Corinthians 10:21) This mixed lifestyle will cause us to compromise our commitment to God. Compromise is an interesting word. It is the word "promise" upon which the prefix "com" has been added. The prefix "com" means together with, co-mingle, (to blend), thus the basis of "mixture". To add to the promise of God makes the promise into a compromise, which is defilement in God's eyes. Think about it in this manner. Scripture says in John 14:26, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Now if we try to change the way with mixture or compromise we defile the way. If we try to change the truth, it no longer is the truth. If we try to change the life, it becomes something other than life. God or His Word does not need changing or any additional ingredient from us. II Corinthians 1 :20 says the promises of God are yes and amen. That means they are true, sure and steadfast. They like God will never change and do not need anything added to make them better. They are perfect and just.

WE HAVE BECOME NUMB!

A problem exists because we do not recognize the infiltration of compromise in our lives. The strongest cause of compromise is "desensitization". We have allowed ourselves to become numb to sin. Certain sin does not bother us anymore because of our insensitivity and dullness. Even worse if we see the sin, we do not make any concerted action to keep it out of our lives. Things we would have been shocked at a few years ago are now part of mainstream lifestyle and accepted by all, even by Christians. If something was a sin 5 years ago, it is still a sin today. God does not change, but just maybe we have begun moving towards lukewarmness.

If all of God's ways, Word, and promises are pure and perfect, why would we want to mix or compromise His word with anything? God gave us His best. The only reason we would allow this to happen is our pride and arrogance. If His Word is THE TRUTH then we should embrace it with such fervor and intensity that nothing, no temptation, influence, or pressure can move us from our position in God.

His plan is perfect His way is perfect. Each one of us have the same access and benefits with no one having a greater advantage over another when it comes to receiving all that God has for us. We have been given the greatest gift in Jesus Christ, our Savior. This alone is enough, but God in His mercy and unconditional love has given us abundantly above all that we can ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20) He has given us everything that we need for life and godliness. (II Peter 1 :3) However, for these things to work the way God ordained them there can be no mixture, no compromise, and no lukewarm life in Christ.

If this newsletter has convicted you, then pray this prayer right now.

"Father I do not want to be lukewarm. I repent and ask you to forgive me for any mixture or compromise in my life. I ask You to forgive my pride for thinking at any time I did not need You. I always need You Lord. I confess these things as sin and receive forgiveness according to I John 1:9. I stand righteous before you because of Jesus. I will be a sold out Christian and by your power and help will keep my life from lukewarmness. I will not allow mixture or compromise to be an influence or hindrance in my life. I will walk in the Word of God by faith and trust. Thank you Father for forgiving me. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

If we can minister to you in anyway or agree with you in prayer please call, e-mail or write. Our contact information is on the front of the newsletter. Remember Jesus loves you and so do we.

Pastors Steve & Cathy Akers