



[Revelation 3:15-16](#)

(15) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. (16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

New King James Version

[Christ](#) admits the [truth](#) about them. "I know your works [obedience and service], that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot" ([Revelation 3:15](#)). Why does He wish this? Because if they were either cold or hot, they would be useful to Him. Lukewarm Christians send confusing messages. In this state, being useless to Him, He spews them out of His mouth. All the messages to these seven churches highlight works because they are evidence of how Christians conduct their relationships with [God](#). Works reveal the heart. They are a gauge of one's witness and spiritual state.

Metaphorically, what does lukewarmness signify here? To define it to this point, a rough definition might be "that which gives no refreshment, or that which has neither the cleansing properties of hot water nor the refreshing properties of cold." Modern synonyms of the word "lukewarm" give illuminating insights into its use in this letter: lacking ardor, enthusiasm or conviction; moderate; mild; unemotional; halfhearted; hesitant; indecisive; irresolute; uncertain; uncommitted; unresponsive; indifferent; impassive; languid; phlegmatic; apathetic; nonchalant; lackadaisical.

Recall the hallmarks of Babylon: [pride](#), self-glorification, reliance on wealth, satiety, complacency, avoidance of suffering. Although he has the abilities and resources to be a great witness, the Laodicean is complacent, self-satisfied, bored with or indifferent to the real issues of life. For a Christian, the real issues are [faith](#) in Christ and our Christian responsibility. And to do the work Christ has called us to, our loyalty and devotion must be to Him, first and foremost!

A problem arises, however, in "spotting" a Laodicean—these qualities do not necessarily show on the outside. Why? Remember Christ describes a spiritual condition. This is a

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matter of the heart. What does He want to see in him? He wants the Laodicean to get off the fence—to be one way or the other, cold or hot. Conversely, the Laodicean judges that he is balanced, right in the middle. But his concept of balance is skewed. Why will he not move off the middle? He feels he has it good there! If he moves left or right, he fears that he will suffer! Thus, he has no desire to move.

Then what happens? The Laodicean must compromise. This is interesting in light of what the history books record. Ancient Laodicea's main line of defense was conciliation and compromise! Why? Again, the answer lies in the city's inadequate water supply, making it very susceptible to the siege of an invading army. By having its tenuous water supply cut off, the city was at the [mercy](#) of its attacker. With no water, it could hold out for only a short while. The Laodicean solution? They became masters of appeasement, accommodation, conciliation, and diplomacy. [Peace](#) at any cost! How did they appease? They bought their enemies off! Laodicea used its wealth to conciliate and compromise.

Christ uses the attitude of the surrounding environment to illustrate that those in the church of Laodicea are affected by the attitudes of [the world](#). Without even realizing it, they behave exactly like their unconverted neighbors. They are worldly. Though they are not out on the streets robbing banks, raping, looting, murdering, mugging old grandmothers, or abusing children, in their hearts they have the same general approach to life as Babylon has. Theologically, spiritually, they hold the same values as Babylon, proved by their works. Spiritually, they become very adept in avoiding the sacrifices that might be necessary to overcome and grow in character, [wisdom](#), and understanding. In other words, they are skilled in appeasing [Satan](#) and their own consciences.

Christ says He will spew, or vomit, the Laodicean from His mouth! That is how He views this attitude of compromise with principles, ideals, standards, and truth!

Some may expect Laodiceans to be lazy, but on the contrary they are often workaholics. Satan has foisted this false concept of [Laodiceanism](#) onto the church. One cannot become "rich and increased with goods" by being lazy! Their problem is a faulty setting of priorities. They are very vigorous people, but they are vigorous in areas that fail miserably to impress their Judge, Christ. Vigorous in conducting business and other carnal affairs, they are lackadaisical in pursuing the beauty of [holiness](#), which is their calling. They are not vigorous or zealous in maintaining their [prayer](#) life with God or in studying. They are not energetic in making the sacrifices necessary to [love](#) their brethren or in developing their relationships with others. Nor are they enthusiastic about guarding the standards and principles of God. By erring in the setting of priorities, they victimize themselves.

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Over the last fifteen years of his life, Herbert Armstrong expressed deep concern about the church becoming Laodicean. Because of the plethora of activities this world offers, he saw that ultimately they distract us, cause us to set wrong priorities, and keep us from putting our time, energy, and vigor into godly things. He often cited [Daniel 12:4](#) as a telltale sign of the last days: "Seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Are we busy in this age? Satan is a slick strategist, and he really deceives anyone who allows himself to believe that busyness and prosperity are signs of righteousness.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The World, the Church and Laodiceanism](#)

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