

Grace for the Humble

Overview of the Seven Churches

Recurring Themes

- He who has an ear...
 - Referring to the person who humbly accepts what he hears or reads and does something about it
 - The heart of this person is humble, repentant, soft (open to instruction, correction and conviction)
 - David responds to the prophet Nathan with this type of heart (Psalm 51)

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Overview of the Seven Churches

Recurring Themes

- He who has an ear...
- I know your deeds...
 - Jesus sees all, knows all, the church belongs to him; consequently, he has the right to judge his church accurately and justly

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Overview of the Seven Churches

Recurring Themes

- He who has an ear...
- I know your deeds...
- To him who overcomes...
 - Blessing is promised to every church that chooses to repent (or turn away) from their wrong-doing, obey Jesus' instruction and remain faithful to Jesus

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Overview of the Seven Churches

Recurring Themes

- He who has an ear...
- I know your deeds...
- To him who overcomes...
- Idolatry
 - Worshipping elevating someone or something to the place of God in your life (place of prominence)
 - Time, money, energy sacrificed/offered/given to a created thing instead of to God, the Creator (Rom 1)
 - Ezekiel 23 – how God sees idolatry

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James 4:1-3

¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?
²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

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Idolatry

➤ Pride

➤ Self First

- I'll do whatever it takes to get what I want – my will be done!
- If I don't get what I want, I will fight, envy and hate those who have it

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Idolatry

➤ Pride

➤ Self First

➤ Self-Sufficient

➤ Boasting of being a “self-made” person

➤ No need to ask – asking for something signifies I can't get it on my own

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Idolatry

➤ Pride

➤ Self First

➤ Self-Sufficient

➤ Selfish Motives

➤ What I have and want are for my own pleasure

➤ We desire God to give us our idols and when he refuses, we get angry

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Idolatry

➤ Pride

➤ Adultery

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James 4:4-6

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."

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Idolatry

- Pride

- Adultery

 - Friendship with the world

 - Putting created things in the place of God

 - Demanding your way and will instead of God's

 - Essentially, we "cheat" on Jesus

 - Jesus – the jealous husband

 - Husband and wife/bride and bridegroom imagery used throughout scripture are pictures of how God views his relationship with his people

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Idolatry

- Pride
- Adultery
- The Results of Idolatry
 - We become enemies of God
 - We become arrogant, self-consumed, and self-sufficient and are opposed by God
 - We are unable to receive the grace God generously and freely offers

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James 4:7-10

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Grace for the Humble

Repentance = Grace for the Humble

- Submit to God and resist the devil
 - Idolatry is resisting God and submitting to the devil
 - We submit to the enemy when we are proud and demand to get our own way rather than God's way
 - We submit to the enemy when we elevate any created thing into a position of prominence in our lives

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Repentance = Grace for the Humble

- Submit to God and resist the devil
- Turn from sin
 - “draw near” is an intentional turning toward God or “returning” to God (Malachi, Zechariah)
 - Laying aside of our own will and desires (humbling ourselves)
 - God will then draw near to us
 - Restoration of relationship

Grace for the Humble

Repentance = Grace for the Humble

- Submit to God and resist the devil
- Turn from sin
- Confess your sin
 - Admission of wrong-doing is part of humility
 - Psalm 24 – clean hands/pure heart and do not lift up your soul to an idol
 - True repentance is accompanied by real remorse
 - E.g. King David, wayward spouse seeking forgiveness
 - Real remorse is followed by behaviour change

Grace for the Humble

Repentance = Grace for the Humble

- Submit to God and resist the devil
- Turn from sin
- Confess your sin
- God's response
 - Grace, forgiveness, embrace
 - God will lift the humble person up unlike the proud person who attempts to elevate himself

Grace for the Humble

Throwing Down Our Idols

- Are there areas in your life that you have compromised with our pagan culture?
- Are there idols in the place where Jesus needs to be in your heart?
- We all struggle with idols – what are your idols?
- Are you willing turn away from your idols and receive the grace God generously offers you?