

## Application Guide: “Who are You Falling For? Part 5” (Rev. 2:8-11)<sup>1</sup>

**Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005:** Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church, continued preaching on the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 as part of his series on worship. This Sunday, Pastor Kimber preached on the church in Smyrna, a church that faithfully served Christ amidst persecution, poverty, slander, trials, imprisonment, and even death. As one of only two churches Christ did not rebuke, there is much we can learn from this church in regards to persevering in the faith.

1. *“To the one who overcomes...” (v.11).* Faith is not just believing; it is being committed to finishing strong and having victory over the flesh, Satan, and the world. Those thrown into hell are cowards (Rev. 21:8)
  - a. Is your faith marked by perseverance (James 1:2-3), boldness (Acts 4:29), and victory (1 Jn. 5:4)? Or do you feel more like the cowardly lion in Oz, driven by fear and stunted by apathy? How are you continuously cultivating your faith?
  - b. How can we know our faith is growing and we are having victory over sin? What are ways we can quantify or keep track of our spiritual growth?
  - c. In what areas of your life are you held captive by fear (e.g. – evangelism, your family’s well-being, relations with your boss, etc)? How is this fear demonstrating a lack of trust in God’s promises and sovereignty (cf. Rom. 8:28-29; Jn. 16:33)? How can you have victory over fear?
2. *Notice how Jesus introduces himself:* He is the First and the Last, he died and rose again, and he knows what is going on in the church of Smyrna (vv. 8-9).
  - a. What is Jesus trying to get across to the saints in Smyrna by saying these things? How does Jesus characterize himself as a Victor?
  - b. How can we take courage and strength from Jesus’ comments here as we struggle in our own lives to be faithful to Christ? What reasons do we have to fully place our trust in Jesus?
3. *“I know your...” (v. 8).* The church in Smyrna was trying to be faithful amidst a whole host of difficult circumstances. Jesus affirms that he has a clear understanding of all they’re experiencing, and he is sovereign over any persecution we might receive from the evil one.
  - a. What does it mean to be rich from Christ’s perspective (v. 9)? How can we keep from being poor by Christ’s standards (cf. 2 Cor. 8:2-3, 9)?
  - b. What is your attitude towards suffering for Christ? Do you desire to be in fellowship with Christ’s sufferings (Phil. 3:10)?
  - c. We may not be persecuted in America, but how do you respond when your schedule is interrupted, your life is inconvenienced, or your expectations and dreams are unmet? Do you see these as opportunities to become more like Christ and be stretched, or do you complain and focus on yourself? How do you need to change the way you respond to trials, be they small or large?
  - d. If suffering is a biblical indicator of true Christianity (cf. 2 Tim. 3:12; Mt. 5:10-12), then why do we avoid it so much? Should we pray that God keep us from trial (Mt. 6:13) or pray that he gives us the strength to go through it (Acts 4:23-31)?

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<sup>1</sup> This is part II in Kimber’s series on The Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3.