

# REVELATION

THE HOPE OF JESUS REVEALED

Part 2: Tough Words

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Jesus loves his people enough to confront them, not coddle them.

**Jesus' challenge is at the end of the discourse:**

"Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."  
- Revelation 2:7

**Jesus has a strong message for his own followers, the Church**

Words of reward

Words of warning

Words of rebuke

Words of command

Words of comfort

**Jesus' Words to the Church in Ephesus**

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary." - Revelation 2:1-3

**Words of Commendation (verses 1-3)**

God knows us - our actions, our hard work and our perseverance

God knows our discernment of truth

God knows how hard and long this journey of life can be

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."  
- Revelation 2:4

**Words of Rebuke**

God knows us better than we know ourselves

God knows the difference between appearing healthy and being healthy

God knows when he has been replaced by an idol

“Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”  
– Revelation 2:5a

### **Words of Command**

**Recognize** – you have forsaken your first love

**Reflect** – how far, long and deep you have fallen away

**Repent** – say it out loud, and then turn from sin

**Return** – do the things you did at first

“If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.” – Revelation 2:5b

### **Words of Warning**

**Realize** – if you don’t repent, there will be a consequence

“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” – Revelation 2:6-7

### **Words of Command**

**Reject** – “Practices of the Nicolaitans” refers to a doctrine of compromise, subtle seduction and sinful integration

**Renew** – hear what God is saying and respond

**Next Step:** Read and contemplate Jesus’ words to the church in Revelation 2:8-11. Where is Jesus in this passage, and what hope is expressed?

### **Personal and Small Group Questions**

- 1) What kinds of words do you like to receive? What kinds of words do you like to give? Are there types of words that are hard for you to give or receive?
- 2) If Jesus were here right now, what would he commend you for? Don’t be overly humble; be honest!
- 3) What type of idol do you struggle with the most? Money? Status? Security? Acceptance? Materialism? Why does that idol have a grip on you?
- 4) Which of the “R” words listed above is the most difficult for you to obey?
- 5) Is there an area of your faith in which you are tempted to compromise? How do you stand strong in the face of that temptation?
- 6) What do you need prayer for today?