

Revelation

The Battle for Your Mind

Revelation 2:12-17

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / May 17, 2026

I. Jesus Knows There's a Battle for Authority and Truth in Your Life

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of Him who has the sharp two-edged sword.'"

Revelation 2:16 "...I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of My mouth."

Why is the One we call "The Prince of Peace" talking about going to war over what's happening in their church? Because the church in Pergamum was facing a fierce battle that we still face today: a battle for who is going to be your authority and source of truth. In other words, it's a battle for the mind.

"Here a pitched battle was being fought, in which soldiers were not men but ideas."

- John R.W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*

Pergamum was a spectacular city that was famous for its magnificent library that held **200,000** parchment scrolls. The city was enamored with words and ideas because the very word "parchment" was derived from their name, Pergamum.

II. Jesus Knows Where that Battle's Being Fought

On top of the spectacular library, they also had a massive altar on a hill above the city that was so magnificent the Germans relocated it to Berlin in the late 1800s and then Hitler massively expanded it for himself to represent his pomp and power.

Revelation 2:13 "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is..."

A. They Were Bombarded from the Outside with Ideas that Contradict God's Word

And **v. 13** tells us that they stood fast.

Revelation 2:13 "...Yet you hold fast My name, and you did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas My faithful witness, who was killed among you..."

They passed the test regarding outside pressure and persecution, but they were failing miserably with what was going on inside the church.

B. They Were Facing Pressure on the Inside from Christians Who Had Compromised

If Satan can't crush the church from the outside with fear and persecution, he'll just join the church and destroy it from the inside with compromise.

Revelation 2:14-15 "...you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam...so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵ So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitians."

He has this against them because the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitians promoted doing what everyone around them was doing regarding idolatry and sexual immorality.

We've got Christians today who twist God's Word and try to convince us that we can chase after the same idols of this world and can do with our bodies anything we want sexually while we still say, "But I'm a Christian."

Our King Jesus would differ with you strongly. In fact, **v. 16** says He goes against you with the sword of His Word.

C. You'll Need to Recognize the Deceptive Lies of this World

Those lies are driven by the father of lies, Satan. That's why Jesus mentions Satan twice in this passage, because the deception in our world is driven by Satan.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

That deception is all the more dangerous when someone takes the same words that Jesus used and redefines them or twists them to mean something else.

D. You'll Need to Recognize Your Own Compromise with this World

This compromise usually starts with the lies of your own heart that work so hard to convince you that you can do what you want because you feel it so strongly, so it's got to be right.

- Where has syncretism crept into your life? Where have you twisted God's Word to make it fit with what you want to do?

1. What about Your Use of Alcohol?

Ephesians 5:18 "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit."

2. What about Your Sexual Purity?

1 Corinthians 6:9, 11, 18-20 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality...¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God...¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

3. What about the Way You Behave Online?

2 Timothy 2:23-26 “Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

4. What about Your Use of Money and Pursuit of Stuff?

1 Timothy 6:6-10 “But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

5. What about Your Promotion of Self?

2 Timothy 3:1-4 “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant...³ ...unappeasable...⁴ ...reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

6. What about Your So-Called “Right” to Rage?

Ephesians 4:31 “Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.”

7. What about Your So-Called “Right” to Be Bitter?

Hebrews 12:15 “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

III. Jesus Calls You to Repent

Jesus is not on board with the world’s definition of tolerance. They’ve decided that tolerance means you can never say someone else is wrong. And you can never say that what you believe is right, and that what you believe is right, is right for everyone, not just some people.

But the reason we should believe it and say it is because Jesus said it!

John 8:32 “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”

Jesus is on board with being patient, gentle, gracious, merciful, humble, and civil while you speak the truth in love. But He will go to war against anyone who tries to blur the lines on what His truth is, because the truth and only the truth will set you free!

He created us, loves us, and longs to see us live full and free lives. And that only happens when you resist the lies of this world and refuse to twist the truth of His Word into something that matches this world.