

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of July 2-8, 2023

## “SMYRNA: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH”

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### GETTING STARTED

*To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.*

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

Would you rather always have B.O. (body odor) and not know it or always smell B.O. on everyone else?

### GROUP DISCUSSION

#### Read Revelations 2:8-11

1. What is the significance of Jesus being described as the “First and the Last, who died and came to life again” in Revelation 2:8? How should this impact the believer’s hope in the midst of difficult circumstances or struggles?
2. What do you think were the challenges faced by the believers of the church in Smyrna? Consider any blessings you have that the church in Smyrna may lack, such as religious freedom or access to resources. Do you think the modern Christian is better off or worse off than the Christians in Smyrna? In what ways?
3. Have you ever been slandered? Consider the idea of enduring slander or false accusations for the sake of Christ, as mentioned in Revelation 2:9. How can you respond with grace and truth when facing unjust criticism or attacks on your faith?
4. What are the potential sacrifices and risks involved in being faithful to Christ for today’s Christian? How can Jesus’ instruction to “be faithful unto death” inspire and challenge you to remain steadfast in your faith, even in the face of trials and persecution?
5. *Application.* Reflect on the phrase "but you are rich" in Revelation 2:9. How does this statement challenge your understanding of wealth and success in the context of your faith? How can a Christian prioritize spiritual riches over worldly possessions? Can you give specific examples?

6. *Application.* How can we practically apply the instruction not to fear to our daily lives as Christians? How does knowing God's character and his promises provide a foundation for living a life free from fear?

### 7. NEXT STEPS

*Jesus suffered for our sake so that we can trust him when we suffer for his sake.*

- I will remain steadfast in my devotion to Christ, even in the face of adversity.
- I will hold onto the hope and assurance that God will reward those who remain faithful.
- I will surrender my fears and anxieties to God, trusting that he will provide the strength and courage I need to face any trials that may come my way.
- I will cultivate a deeper connection with God through daily prayer and a stronger reliance on his grace and mercy.

*Don't forget to:*

- Go through the devotionals every day this week.
- Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God's Word.

### CLOSING THE SESSION

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for wisdom and courage to live for Jesus.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers, that you will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends, and loved ones.
- Pray for protection, provision, healing and comfort for everyone who's going through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain.

### BIBLE READING GUIDE

July 3 Matthew 13:1-23  
July 4 Psalms 34  
July 5 1 Corinthians 10:1-13  
July 6 2 Corinthians 1:3-11  
July 7 Luke 12:16-21  
July 8 Proverbs 12:17-22  
July 9 Revelations 2:12-17