

## I Know Where You Live

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### Day One

Do you sometimes feel like nobody really understands what you have to put up with? Nobody really knows what it's like to live in your shoes—in your world? In writing to the church in Pergamum, the Lord Jesus said through John, "I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name" (Revelation 2:13a).

Jesus understands where you live, and he knows you and I are living our lives where Satan has his throne. Satan is temporarily in power, and we live and work right in the middle of his territory. It's analogous to living in a foreign land, where you speak a different language, have a totally different culture, and a completely alien set of values to everyone else.

But Jesus says, I know where you live—and where you work. Right in the midst of people who care nothing about spiritual things. They don't want to talk about Jesus, and what you find exciting and encouraging would bore many of them to death, because they're spiritually blind.

How do we manage in that kind of world? Well, Jesus says we are to be in this world but not of it. So, we are not to allow the people of this world to pull us down to their level. Yet we are to be available and open to be their friends, to help them when we can, to spend time with them for edifying and harmless reasons.

Each of us has to pray a lot and ask God how we draw these lines in our own lives. For example, if the conversation among your coworkers is almost always crude, immoral, degrading or negative, you probably don't want to voluntarily put yourself into those group gatherings. Admittedly, that could make you appear to be a loner, but if you have a loving attitude toward these people, you can still have an impact on some of them.

Usually we exert influence in one-on-one situations rather than group settings. So, look for ways to develop relationships with individuals and spend time getting to know them. People are more willing to be open one-on-one than in a group, so that may be one way to deal with this problem.

Since you live in enemy territory, don't be surprised to discover that those around you see life totally different because they don't have God's viewpoint. They are spiritually blind. But you must remain true to the name of Jesus. That's more important than anything else.

Remember Jesus knows where you live and he will be with you in your difficult work environment. So take heart, because he has overcome the world.

### Day Two

In Revelation 2, we see what Jesus says to the church in Pergamum, "I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name" (Revelation 2:13a). I can relate to that church, can't you? We live in a foreign land where temporarily Satan is in charge. And sometimes it feels like

we're aliens from Mars or something, because we are often out of place in this satanically-controlled world.

But Jesus says to us what he said to the church in Pergamum: I know where you live—in the midst of a society that laughs at God's principles of sexual purity. Dear friends, we must not let this world system shove us into its mold when it comes to sexual principles and standards.

I remember when thousands of young people in Florida made a pledge to live celibate, pure lives, and not have sex until married. The media hardly covered the story, and when they did, it was as though these were just a small group of weird young people making this ridiculous pledge to live a pure sexual life.

The world actually believes it's not only ridiculous, but impossible to live by Christian principles regarding sex. When we suggest that teaching abstinence before marriage is the best way to be healthy and contented, they react with condescension and disbelief. You can't expect people to abstain from sex, they say, just because they're not married.

May I say something very clear and plain: It is certainly possible for unmarried people to live celibate lives. That is not mission impossible, and it is not weird. Oh, it will take discipline and self-control, but anything worthwhile requires discipline and self-control. Don't be deceived by the messages you hear all around you, either for yourself or your children. It is possible to live pure lives even in this world.

Remember, Jesus knows where we live. He knows we are bombarded with illicit sex all the time; he knows how the standards have been lowered in our society with the sexual revolution. But he also knows that if we lower our standards, we will pay a terrible price, just as many have already.

Don't lower your standards; don't be intimidated by the people around you who talk as though free sex is normal and natural. It is not free; it is very costly, and you will pay a high price if you don't live a pure life.

Jesus knows where you live, and he wants you to remain true to his name right there where you are. He'll give you the power to do it, so don't give up.

### **Day Three**

I want you to know that Jesus knows where you live. And he understands that as a Christ-follower, you are not living in friendly territory, but he wants you and me to remain true to his name, even in the midst of this foreign land.

For example, Jesus knows that we live in a world that believes owning and having are the trademarks of success. Where money is power and influence is bought and sold. Where your value and your worth are often based on your bank account.

It is not easy to live in this foreign land and not be bitten by the money bug. Jesus told us we cannot serve God and Money, with a capital "M", because he wants us to understand that money has spiritual power. That means it can exert an incredibly strong influence over us and cause us to do things we would never dream of otherwise.

We've seen many people who've been caught doing all kinds of wrong things for money. And we may think that we would never do that. But don't be so sure. Money corrupts quickly and we are all susceptible to its power.

What can we do, living in this world where money is king, to keep from being caught in this web of greed? First, we must constantly pray about the power of money in our lives. I often pray, "Lord, make

me positionless and possessionless," and by that I mean, "Make me aware that I own nothing; everything I have is a gift from you and your name is on the title. And any position I have is an opportunity for me to serve you and others. So help me to remember that I am positionless and possessionless."

Do you own things or do your things own you? One thing that will free you up from the power of money is to simplify your life and get rid of some stuff. Do you find this as hard to do as I do? All you have to do is walk through any mall or browse through Amazon, and you can see a dozen things you think you can't live without, and the power of those things starts to take over. Maybe we need to stop shopping; just stop looking so we are not tempted.

If we want to remain true to the name of Jesus, we must put disciplines into our lives that free us from the power of money and greed. Jesus knows where we live, and he knows that everyone around us is money hungry. But he can give us the power to live free of this greed if we will let him.

## Day Four

Have you ever suffered prejudicial treatment? It comes in all forms, and it seems this world is full of it. I'm quite certain that all of you know what it's like to live in a world full of prejudice and hatred, where people are maligned and mistreated because of the color of their skin or their cultural heritage. We live in a world that is full of injustice, where fairness and fair play are rare commodities.

John wrote to the church in Pergamum in Revelation 2:13a: "I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name." We are living in Satan's territory, and one of his most effective tricks is to prejudice people against each other.

As believers, we must search our hearts and attitudes and make certain that we do not harbor any kind of prejudice that would cause us to treat people in unfair and hurtful ways. It could be that your parents taught you to be prejudiced, and you need to clean out that wrong teaching. Or maybe you have developed your own prejudice toward certain people or certain types.

There should be no trace of any kind of racial prejudice among Christians. We should be color-blind. Do you have friends of a different race? Do you fellowship with believers from another culture? If not, you are missing some enriching and wonderful blessings in your life.

You know, these prejudicial attitudes can be very subtle. For example, even though we know that homosexuality is a sin, we still should not have prejudicial attitudes toward people who are homosexual. They are people, created by God, loved by God, and we should not shun them because of their lifestyle. Many Christians have failed to understand that you can hate the sin but love the sinner. Thank goodness that is true, because we're all sinners and yet God loves us.

Do you tend to treat people better or worse based on how they're dressed, or how smart they are, or whether they're important people or not? That is prejudicial treatment, and it is unbiblical.

It's hard to live in this world and not be caught up in prejudice of some kind or another because it's all around us. But like the church at Pergamum, Jesus knows where we live and he wants us to stay true to his name, to his standards, to his way right in the midst of all that prejudice. We can do it, because we have his power to do it in us. Remember, he knows where you live.

## Day Five

In Romans 12:1-2 we are admonished not to be "conformed to this world." Since we are living in a world foreign to God and his principles, it is terribly important that we do not allow the world to shove us

into its mold. The church Pergamum lived right where Satan had his throne. Yet they remained true to the name of Jesus (Revelation 2).

Could that be said of you and me? Living in this alien world, are we still living lives true to Jesus and his gospel? Our society, for example, is addicted to self and everybody's out for themselves. Self-glory and self-satisfaction are the chief aim of most of the people where you live.

I don't know about you, but I'm at the point that if I hear "self-esteem" one more time, I'm going to explode. Aren't you sick of hearing how everything wrong with anybody is because they have "low self-esteem"? We were singing the hymn *May the Mind of Christ My Savior* in church recently which has this verse:

*May the love of Jesus fill me, as the waters fill the sea.  
Him exalting, self abasing; this is victory.*

As I sang that verse, I thought, *self abasing*? Do we know what we're singing? That means, putting self down in a world that says you have to feel good about yourself. In a world that insists you cannot be a healthy person if you don't have very high self-esteem. Self abasing? That's pretty radical stuff!

My friends, "Him exalting, self abasing; this is victory" is the truth of Scripture. When we exalt Jesus and die to our own selves, we are victorious. We'll feel good, but not about ourselves. We'll be fulfilled, but not self-fulfilled. When we fill up with self, we ask for depression, for discouragement, for defeat, because self is our problem, not our solution.

In the midst of a world gone crazy for self, will you live a life that says "Him exalting, self abasing; this is victory"? The more you think about yourself, the more miserable you'll be. The more you exalt Jesus Christ, the more you are filled with his love, the more you'll know what your mission in life is. You don't need to work at having good self-esteem; you need to know Jesus in depth and from that comes a right and balanced view of who you are in Christ.

"I know where you live" Jesus says to us. And I want you to be true to my name right there in the midst of that self-centered society. This is victory.