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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
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SERIES: Revelation (God's Message To The Church)

TITLE: Program 15 – Reproof And Invitation

FRIDAY

OPEN

Everybody just likes you. They just like you because you're so accommodating, because you don't have any extremes in your opinions or anything and anybody comes along, you just open your arms and you welcome them and so if they believe this, they believe that. You're just a good ole guy or a good ole girl. Well if you're a good ole guy or a good ole girl to everyone, what are you to God?

PART ONE

If you and I were to drive about 45 miles southeast of the ancient city of Philadelphia, we would come just to an open nothingness where the church of Laodicea used to be in the city of Laodicea. Now if we were to go about 7 miles north we would come to an awesome, awesome place where you would see ice and steam and everything cause we would go to the city of Hieropolis. Hierapolis was a city that was 7 miles north, that was a city of

hot water, hot water just steaming up out of the earth making the most interesting configurations. If we were go south to Colossae then we would go to the city that Paul wrote to when he wrote the letter to the Colossians. And when he wrote that letter to the Colossians he told them I want you also to get this to the church at Laodicea. Laodicea now is really nothing to see. But in the day in which it was a city it was a very wealthy city. Let me tell you a little bit about it. It was in a very fertile valley. And it was noted for the black glossy wool that it produced and the clothing that came with it. It was a medical center. They had a phygerian kind of powder that was used as an eye salve to cure eyes. They had ointments for ears. It was a banking center. I mean it was a very, very wealthy city. It was a nondescript city. I mean the only thing it was noted for was its wealth. It had no history of great achievements. It was an nih, nih, nih kind of city. But when the earthquakes came and they came to Philadelphia and they came in this area; when the earthquakes came and their city was destroyed, then when Rome offered to rebuild this city, they said we don't need your help because they had enough money. When you look at Laodicea and you understand these things about it and you understand that they had a water problem, so they shipped in their water from the south. Now it was coming from Colossae where the water was very, very cold. But by the time it got to Laodicea it was just lukewarm, kind of nauseating water. If they would have gotten it from Hieropolis, by the time they got it down to Laodicea, it would be lukewarm also, very, very unappetizing. Well let's look and see what he says to the church at Laodicea and how knowing all these things will help us understand what he says. Remember now, we're on our final lesson, our final program in our study of Revelation 1, 2, & 3, the Letters to the Churches. And the reason we started in chapter 1 is because every time Jesus Christ defines Himself, describes Himself to a church, that description is taken from a truth that we see in chapter 1. As I told you every time He talks to the overcomers He's talking about truths and rewards that we find in those last few glorious chapters of

Revelation. So Revelation, chapter 3, verse 14: “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen ...,” this is the Amen. The Amen means the so be it. It means it is true. “... The faithful and true Witness” now that’s what we saw about Jesus in Revelation, chapter 1, that He is a faithful Witness. He is the beginning of the creation of God and He says this. Now listen, if He’s the beginning of the creation of God it means He’s before creation. It means that He was there when everything was created. So He’s the beginning. And how did everything come into existence? Well it didn’t evolve. You may hear that and you may hear those theories, but believe me they are theories and there is no legitimate scientific proof of that. And if you get beyond the lies of Satan and you go back to people that are true scientists they will tell you that there is no legitimate proof for evolution. But the book of Hebrews in the 11th chapter tells us how the world came into existence. It says God spoke and it was done, Amen, Amen. He’s the beginning of creation. It says in John, chapter 1, “In the beginning was the word. Here’s the Word. The word was with God ...,” Here’s God. So my right hand is the Word. My left hand it God. In the beginning was the Word, my right hand. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” So you have the Word, Jesus; you have God the Father, both together and both God. He is the beginning of the creation of God and He says this: “I know your deeds.” He knows our deeds. There’s no hiding from Him. And you know we can be like the church at Sardis who say that we’re alive but we’re really dead and the reason that, that is true is because God sees everything. He’s the Omnipotent, Omniscient, all knowing, Omnipresent God. And He says, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot.” Now do you understand? Their water, which was short supply. If they got it from someplace else then it would come in lukewarm. And He says I know that you’re not cold. I know that you’re not hot. I know that you’re not like the water at Colossae. I know that you’re not like the water at Hierapolis,

which is very, very hot. I know that. And He says you know what? I wish you were. I wish you were either hot or cold. And He says, "... but you ...," He says, "... are lukewarm. You're neither hot, nor cold." You make Me want to vomit. You make Me want to vomit. Because you're not hot and because you're not cold, He says, "I want to spit you out of My mouth." But that's a nice translation. He really is saying I want to vomit you out of My mouth. You make me want to vomit. Now if you have a child that's taken something that they shouldn't take and you want them to vomit, one of the things that you can try is lukewarm water. I want you to see how graphic God is putting it. This is what you make Me want to do. And I want you to know, my friend, that if you are this wonderful guy, this wonderful woman and everybody just absolutely loves you and they just absolutely love you, because you're not passionate about anything. And see this was the church; this was the city of Laodicea. They had no notable achievements. Why? Because they were placid, because they came along and they accommodated everyone. When you are a child of God, and listen to me carefully, when you are a child of God behaving like a child of God should behave, then you are hot. You are hot. Well God looks at you and He says man, that's My child. My child's hot. He says I want you hot or if you're not going to be hot I want you cold, because when you're lukewarm you give the wrong message. And I want you to know if you're a good ole guy or you're a good ole woman and you just get along with everybody in the world there is something wrong. You are not standing for Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ dealt with the multitude, if you go through and you read the gospels, you're going to see that He never left them in neutral. They either were willing to follow Him, no matter what it cost they were ready to stone Him. They were not in that lukewarm apathetic, accommodating state. Why? Because Jesus didn't have very much popularity. His ministry started off that way, but His popularity soon began to wane. They saw the miracles and so they flocked after Him. But when He began to give the message, when He gave the

Sermon on the Mount, when He talked about what it really meant to be part of the kingdom of God, it threw the people off their feet. And it threw the people off their feet because He was talking very, very radically. He was talking about a radical, a distinctively different lifestyle and that's what you need to see. God does not want you lukewarm. God is not impressed; He's not impressed with you just accommodating everyone that comes along because there is a time. Let me just show you what Paul says in his very last letter, which is 2 Timothy. And we want to go to chapter 4. As Paul writes to his son in the gospel, the one to whom he is handing the baton in this relay race of passing the truth and guarding the truth and keeping the truth, down from one generation to the next generation until Christ comes, as he writes to him he says in 2 Timothy, chapter 4. "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and kingdom." What is he presenting before Timothy? He's presenting before Timothy the fact that God is going to judge the living and the dead. This is the One with the feet of burnished bronze. This is the One "with eyes like flames of fire." This is "the all discerning One." This is the "One that knows." This is "the One that has the keys to hell and death." He is "the One that has the keys to David." He is "the One that locks and no one opens and the One that opens and no one shuts." He is "the One and He is the judge of the living and the dead. His appearing is coming. His kingdom is coming." And he says, "Preach the Word."

PART TWO

Now let's get back to 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 2. He says, "Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove and rebuke." He says that before he says, "... exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, solid teaching. Reproving and rebuking" One of the words means you're going to tell them what's wrong and they're going to listen and it's going to do some good. The other word means you're going to tell them and they're

going to totally ignore you. But he says, “Whether they accept what you say or ignore what you say, and pass it off, you are to be faithful to God. You are to preach the word. You are to reprove and you are to rebuke.” Now listen, you can’t do that and be a good ole guy. There are times to call peoples hands. There are times to show them I’m sorry, but that’s wrong; but that is against the Word of God. God has led me to do it time after time again. He’s told me to do it with long-suffering. He’s told me to do it with doctrine. And so I do it in that way. But you do it, He says, “... because the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, sound teaching. But they will want to have their ears tickled. They will accumulate themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires.” Well that’s what a Laodician is. Whatever you desire is fine. Laodicea is a syncretism that makes you neither hot nor cold. Syncretism means to blend two things together that shouldn’t be blended together. And he says so this is what makes you lukewarm. Well, now let’s go back and see what He says. He says in verse 17: “Because you say I am rich, and I have become wealthy ...,” You understand that now, don’t you? “... and I have need of nothing.” I don’t have need of anything. Don’t even send us money to rebuild after the earthquake. We don’t need it. We’ve got plenty of money. Isn’t that sad? He says, “I am rich and he says I have become wealthy. I have need of nothing.” He says you don’t know. “You are wretched and you are blind and you are poor and you are naked.” Compare that with the suffering church in Smyrna. He says, “I know your poverty, but you’re rich.” Now He’s saying to the church in Laodicea, the opposite: “I know that you are wealthy, but you are poor. You are not only poor, but you are blind and you are wretched and you are naked.” In other words, bless your hearts, you don’t know how bad off you are. So you good ole Joe’s, you good ole girls that just go along with anything and never have any opinion and what you want really is the approbation of others. That’s what you want. You just want everybody to like you because it’s about you so you’re not going to stand for anything.

And as I demonstrated, you make God want to vomit. He says, “I advise you; buy from Me ...,” Now watch what He says. Number one: “... gold refined by fire, that you may become rich” Now what is gold refined by fire? Well if you would go to 1 Peter, chapter 1, he would talk about the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold, which purifies. Gold goes through a fire, a purifying fire and he says you need some suffering in your life. You need some suffering by getting off the fence. You need some suffering by standing for who Jesus Christ is and being adamant and being passionate about Him. He says, “... buy from me gold refined by fire that you may become rich and white garments that you may clothe yourself.” He says you don’t know how naked you are. Now remember He talks about white garments to Sardis. And when you look at chapter 6, verse 11 of Revelation, you find a group of people that are under the altar and they’re crying out to God, “... how long before You avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth ...,” And it says, “... and they were given to each of them, a white robe, a white robe and they were told that they should rest a little while longer.” So they were to have on a white robe. Look at Revelation, chapter 7, verse 9. And it says, “After these things I looked and a great multitude which no one could count from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands. And they asked who these were.” And these were people who had suffered for God. So He’s saying to them, He’s saying listen, “... buy these white robes ...,” Verse 13 of Revelation 7, “... these who are clothed in white robes: who are they and from where have they come?” And He says, “These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Well, go back to Revelation, chapter 3. He says, “... and you need to buy eye salve from Me, not the hygeian powder. You need to buy eye salve from Me to anoint your eyes that you might see.” Because you know what? You’re so spiritually blind that you

can't see your own condition. He says, "... those whom I love ...," I love it. He's extending His love to them. And He says "... those whom I love, I reprove." Remember what we saw in 2 Timothy. "I reprove and I discipline ...," and He says, "... be zealous therefore, get hot and repent." Get hot and repent. I can't stand you lukewarm. You make me want to vomit so I want you hot. I really don't want you cold. But I'd rather have you cold than I would have you lukewarm and I'll tell you why. Because then people know, hey, you don't belong to Me at all. You don't belong to Jesus Christ because you're really cold towards Him. It's when you're lukewarm that you give the wrong message. You give this message of neutrality. You give this message of accommodation. You give this message that God's a good ole God and He doesn't want anybody to go to hell. And He really doesn't care and you and the Man upstairs have settled it. You've got your own way to God. That is a lie. You are deceived. You need eye salve so that you can see. He says, "Those whom I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and I'm knocking. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door I will come into him, and will dine with him and He with me." I want to have fellowship with you. But see fellowship is two fellows in the same ship. And Jesus was never lukewarm. Jesus was hot for God, so hot, so passionate, that He spoke the truth; He reprovved those that needed reprovving and He went to the cross in order to buy your and my salvation. It says, "... I will come in to him, and will dine with him and he with Me. He who overcomes ...," listen, "... I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne." If you believe that I'm the Christ, if you get passionate for Me, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. What a way to end. I know that Jesus ordered these letters in the order that they come because He wants us to be hot for Him, passionate for Him. And He knows the only way that we can do it is to open the door; let Him in; identify with Him and then we'll sit with Him on His throne.