

Letters Week 6 Study Guide

Letter to Philadelphia

1.) What thought pops in your mind when you hear the phrase 'closed door of opportunity'? What about 'open door of opportunity'?

2.) On Sunday, we learned about the letter to the church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia was originally founded as a missionary city for the Greco-Roman culture. It was expected to influence the barbarian tribes who lived beyond their borders. The founders of Philadelphia hoped that the barbarians would be impressed by their gods, wealth & power...and would embrace their way of life. The barbarians continued to live in opposition to the Roman Empire & rejected the influence of Philadelphia. What are some ways that you've witnessed modern nations try to influence other people groups with their way of life?

3.) Read Revelation 3:7. Jesus identifies Himself with 3 titles: Holy One, True One & The One Who Has The Key Of David. Which of these titles connect with you the most?

4.) Let's focus on Jesus' title as the 'one who has the key of David' in Revelation 3:7. This is a significant phrase, as many of the Christians in Philadelphia came from a Jewish background. How might they relate with the name David in Christ's title? Read John 14:6. How can this verse shed some light on the meaning of Christ holding a key?

5.) Read Revelation 3:8 and Matthew 28:18-20. What is the open door that Christ has provided for His people?

6.) In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples 'Who do people say that I am?' They replied that some people viewed Him as Elijah or Moses. So Jesus asked them to share their opinion about his identity. Peter proclaimed 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God'. Read Matthew 16:17-18. How can these verses provide boldness and courage to obey our mission of making disciples?

7.) Read Revelation 3:9. What does this verse reveal about the pain of rejection in the lives of the Christians in Philadelphia? Do you find it easy or difficult to relate with their rejection?

8.) Read Revelation 3:10-11. Which detail(s) encourage you the most in these verses?

9.) The city of Philadelphia was positioned on fertile ground that allowed them to be rich in vineyards. Their land was fertile due to its position near a volcano. This made them extremely wealthy in the wine industry. Although their location was a blessing, it could also feel like a curse at times. Since they lived so close to a volcano, their city experienced violent earthquakes. When an earthquake came, the citizens fled outside the city to avoid being crushed by falling buildings. Revelation 3:12a says that Jesus will make those who are faithful into a 'pillar in the

temple of my God, and he will never go out again.' How would this promise encourage the church in Philadelphia? How can it encourage us today?

10.) The city of Philadelphia was devastated by an earthquake in 17AD. So the emperor Tiberius remitted their taxes and also made a generous donation to help them rebuild their city. To express their gratitude, the leaders of Philadelphia changed their city's name to Neo-Caesarea...which means 'new town of Caesar'. Despite their efforts to change their name, the surrounding areas continued to call their city by its original name. In Revelation 3:12b, Jesus provides more encouragement to His faithful ones by saying "I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God - the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from my God - and my new name." What are some ways that these promises could have encouraged the church in Philadelphia? How can we gain hope and strength in our faith today?

11.) Read Revelation 3:13 & Revelation 3:8. What is an open door that Christ has provided for you to influence others for Him?

(Group Leaders, listen for any fear or hesitation in peoples' answers. Be sure to remind them that Jesus promised - in Revelation 3:8 - that 'no one can close' His open door because we have 'but little strength'.)

12.) Spend time praying for one another. Ask Jesus for wisdom, courage and strength to walk through His open doors.