

March 2008—Lukewarm Missionaries!? Say it Ain't So!

Part 1 of 2

Could I be a lukewarm believer? Recently while reading Revelation 3, I stopped afresh and asked myself that question. Now don't get your hopes up; I'm not asking for public opinion, but let's not be shocked at the possibility of *lukewarmness* in my life or yours. When any of us read such a warning—actually an indictment—we must at least consider that the same peril applies to us! Add to that the prospect of self-deception, and it is obvious that each of us should evaluate ourselves carefully.

This is so serious that we dare not allow our emotions—or comparisons to others—decide the issue. So I conduct an assessment using some basic spiritual benchmarks. May I lovingly extend to you my “measuring sticks”? In each case, ask God to help you evaluate; am I hot (sold out to the Lord), am I cold (against God) or am I lukewarm?

SERVICE—while it may sound absurd that I would challenge missionaries (myself included) concerning service, do we really *serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing* (Ps. 100:2)? Without doubt, I understand that we are not *against (or cold)* to service, but that's not God's objection, is it? Are we hot? Do we serve with enthusiasm and passion?

SCRIPTURE—do we love the Word, study it, memorize and saturate ourselves with it? Or do we ignore, rarely use and neglect it? Do we spend more time with the newspaper than the Word of God? Are we hot when it comes to *studying to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (2 Tim. 2:15)?

SANCTIFICATION—the Bible teaches that we should be set apart to and for the Lord. *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation* (1 Pet. 1:15). That we should *come out from among them, and be ye separate* (2 Cor.6:17). Since God's grace has brought us salvation, *we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world* (Titus 2:11). This is not a list of do's and don't or some form of legalism, rather it is a lifestyle that has its root and growth in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. When it comes to holiness, I seriously doubt that you are cold. But are you hot? Lukewarm?

SUPPLICATION—again, I assume we are not *against* prayer; I pray we are not cold. But when was the last time we got alone with the Lord, or missed a meal or a night's sleep to pray? Are we hot when it comes to prayer. James encourages us—*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* (James 5:16).

SACRIFICE—I understand that the Lord wants our lives as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1, 2). But let's not make the mistake of believing that since we have given ourselves as missionaries, that we are exempt from careful scrutiny in this area. Will you join me in asking when was the last time we gave something to the Lord that really cost us something? Are we hot concerning sacrifice?

SOUL WINNING—do we care about the souls that are mortgaged to the devil? When it comes to soul winning—are we hot or cold or lukewarm?

It is my desire that this has been a tender confrontation. If you are lukewarm, make whatever changes are necessary; there are enough answers in Rev. 3:17-20 to start with the cure.

Bill