



**“Loyal”
— Dear Church—
Small Group Plan**

I have a good friend whose name is Isaac. A talented athlete he played soccer for the national team of a third world country. As a member of the team, he was required to pay homage and pour libations to the tribal gods of his country. It seemed like a small thing, but there was one major problem. Isaac had recently become a Christian. His new faith clashed with his career bringing new pressures and choices.

On one hand he could protect his exciting career with its nice salary, travel opportunities and government perks, but he would have to compromise his faith. On the other hand, if he made the faith choice he could lose his career, join his countrymen in poverty, but keep his faith solid.

Now the libations occurred just before games. They didn't take long, and he didn't have to be serious. But, in his heart, he knew it would be a compromise. What would Isaac do?

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How would you advise Isaac? Give your reasons, not just your bottom line.
- Have you ever had to choose faith over career or promotion/advancement? What happened?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

I KNOW ...

Revelation 2:18-18

¹⁸ To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

- Why does Jesus always begin, with each church, with affirmation?
- What does, “doing more than ... at first” mean?
- Why do many today skip the affirmation and go straight to the accusation?

NEVERTHELESS ...

Revelation 2:20-23

²⁰ Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. ²² So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. ²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

- Jesus targets four groups:
- (V. 20) Church Leaders who tolerate compromise.
Why does leadership sometimes overlook family problems?
How/why does this make the problem even more difficult?
- (Vs. 22-22) The Jezebel Spirit who leads others into compromise.
Why is leadership a serious, even frightening, position (cf. James 3:1)?
How can spiritual leaders be both careful and courageous?
- (V. 22) Christians who choose business success over spiritual health.
Isaac in West Africa and the Christian in first century Thyatira were tempted to put career ahead of faith. How does this choice show itself in Dallas?

NOW TO THE REST ...

Revelation 2:24-29

²⁴ Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): ²⁵ Only hold on to what you have until I come. ²⁶ To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations — ²⁷ 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery' — just as I have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ I will also give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- And the fourth group:
- (Vs. 24-28) Those choosing faith over career.
How did these early Christians resist the peer-pressure to compromise their faith?
- How would you describe the strength they relied upon?
- What promises did they depend upon?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

BE PREPARED

- How do you respond to the proverb, “Don’t lose your job because of your faith, expand your faith to accommodate your job?”

BE DEVOTED

- How can compromise be a good course of action in person-to-person relationships but never a good course of action in the person-to-God relationship?

BE ENCOURAGED

- When I was a young man and my dad would have to discipline me, he would often say, “If I didn’t care about you, I wouldn’t even fool with you.”
- Why does Jesus even take the time to warn and admonish His followers?
- Are you usually humble in the face of correction or defensive? Explain.
- Close by asking for God for “ears to hear” (v. 29), hearts to accept and a life to follow.