



# + YOU

Winter 2024-25  
The Heart of Worship

**Sermon Title:** Monitor Your Faithfulness

**To be used with Session 3:** The Attitude of Worship

**Scripture:** Revelation 3:1-3

## **Connection with the Study:**

**Introduction:** What is the distinction between a fan and a follower? What would be a clear distinction between a “fan” of Jesus and a “follower” of Jesus? Fans cheer from a safe distance and never get on the field. They are content with their popcorn and beverage with a keen vantage point of the contest. Followers get as close to the game as possible. They cannot get enough of their team and are engaged with their team on numerous levels. True followers try to copy, emulate, or live like their favorite coach or team. They rise above common fandom.

Simply being a fan or follower of Jesus is not enough. There is a greater level of commitment. The idea of pursuing to be like the one we follow should be amplified even more by Christians. We are to be more. We are to be disciples, not simply cheering or even trying to copy His actions, but truly doing our best to walk in the very footsteps of Jesus and seeking to grow in true likeness of Him. The end goal of a Christian is to be a disciple of Jesus. As a Christian is it possible to know God and yet be somewhat cold toward Him? Can our actions proclaim partial devotion to our Lord? Ask yourself, “Am I just a fan or follower of Jesus? Shouldn’t I be His devoted disciple?”

### **1. Nothing is hidden from God (Rev. 3:1).**

The church at Sardis had a great reputation, but upon close examination, its ministry did not live up to its great name. God knows our hearts and He sees everything. We might believe we are exceedingly alive in our walk with God, but it is possible that we can deceive ourselves. Though Sardis thought they were alive, they were dead. Sardis did not look alive in God’s eyes.

It is impossible to fool God. He knows whether we are dead or alive. Could it be that the church of Sardis was simply comfortable? They may have been satisfied with the status quo. (Does this sound familiar?) Perhaps they enjoyed their preferences, their methods, and “their Jesus” to get them through the week without realizing the heights and depths of true discipleship.

Perhaps “our Jesus” is enough for some of us? “Our Jesus” would be the image of Him that we may have fabricated. There are those people who play church or simply attend for the wrong reasons. They attend for social, emotional, family, business, or other reasons. Our motives

should be tied to worship, fellowship, prayer, disciple-making, evangelism, and so forth. When we lose sight of the purpose for gathering as a church, death begins to set in.

## **2. Death doesn't just happen (Rev. 3:2).**

Many beautiful European church and cathedrals have been turned into lofts, museums, and other things. Many churches in the United States currently suffer from decline and closure. When people allow distraction and sin to permeate their lives and their churches, death occurs. Dead churches are more inwardly focused, do not invest in new or younger leaders, de-emphasize evangelism, trivialize heartfelt worship and prayer, and begin to even fail to meet as congregations.

There are also indications in individuals that point to being dead in their faith. Do we desire to serve others? Has Bible study become tiresome? Do we tend to pray only when life brings trouble? Do we have little to no personal time for worship of God? Do we ever share our faith with others or bring people to church? These painful questions may point toward a problem of distracted lives; lives spent placing spiritual matters far below other matters.

## **3. Distraction brings sin (Rev. 3:3).**

John admonished the church at Sardis to stay alert. He instructed them to keep their eyes on the horizon rather than the foreground. The foreground is full of distractions. Distractions are harmful. They keep us focused on things other than spiritual matters. They are in every corner of our world which can manifest as physical, material, financial, and even recreational distractions. Those things wherein our attention lies above the things of God are distractions. Distractions must be conquered for us to avoid being conquered by them.

What distracts us from spending time with God or serving Him? How often are we guilty of being too distracted? Is it possible we are even asleep on our watch, too lethargic to warn others of the return of Christ and of their need to accept the grace of God prior to entering eternity? We must remember God's faithfulness. He is always faithful and true. We must monitor our faithfulness to Him and how we pursue Him. We must take note of our hearts' desires and of those things upon which we spend our time.

Whenever God would lead the Israelites into a new territory or deliver them from the hand of their enemies, Israel would often mark that place by either building an altar or marker stones. These stones would serve as a reminder to how God provided for Israel as anyone would pass by them. We must each personally remember His faithfulness and use those memories as inspiration to remain faithful to Him.

**Conclusion:** Monitoring our faithfulness means keeping track of how we are doing in our spiritual lives. The Lord would not have us forsake the spiritual for the distractions of the world.

Here are three useful questions we can use to evaluate our faithfulness to God:

1. How well am I loving God and others?
2. How well am I remaining dedicated to the things of God?

### 3. How well am I repenting of worldly distractions?

We must practice loving both God and others despite how we may feel. These are the greatest and second greatest commandments. We must remain devoted to worship, Bible study, and service, making room in our schedules for these spiritual matters. We must also repent of the allure of sin, live above the world's distractions, and pursue God above all else.

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