

# Bible Studies for Life: July 18

*Sufficient in Christ Alone • Revelation 3:14-22*

*By Clay Anthony*



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Is there another experience worse than purchasing a car? You drive on the lot and feel several eyes on you. Sales staff is waiting to pounce and tell you all that you would ever desire to know about MPG, safety features, and cup holders. These people are just doing their job to earn their commission, and that is the reason behind all the selling points.

Looking back on the church at Laodicea, we can see where they had purchased a faith that was more like an automotive lemon. These believers stood in need of a replacement that only King Jesus could supply. We know this by glancing at His selling points.

**Sufficiency (vv.14-17).** Two trading routes crossed within the city limits of Laodicea. This church had no problems with their budget. In AD 60, this region was devastated by an earthquake and Laodicea was able to rebuild with no help from the Roman government.

By all accounts, these people needed nothing. They were self-sufficient and that makes for a great place to reside, except for the fact that they had no inlet of fresh water. This

wealthy city had to rely on local hot springs and aqueducts to supply their water needs.

By the time the water was carried from its origins, either hot springs or far away lakes, its temperature had become lukewarm. Unfamiliar travelers would stop for refreshment only to taste the sulfur-laced warm spring water and become sick.

Jesus' response to this church now needs no explanation: their attitude made Him want to vomit. His words are faithful and true for they come from *the* amen not *an* amen, which is the proper response when hearing from God. (Isa 65:16)

**Reliability (vv. 18-19).** Laodicea had the idea that prosperity abounded, that everyone looked up to them, that their wool market was worthy of boasting, and that its famous-yet-unsophisticated ophthalmology center could cure eye ailments.

These people lived as though they needed nothing, yet they lived a life of irony. All that they perceived about themselves was actually false (v. 17). Only Jesus could be trusted to provide what they truly needed – and what they needed could not be purchased on earth. They needed aid from above, not from within.

Only a loving Savior would respond in this manner toward people that held His affections. The reliable correction of Jesus is birthed out of love (Luke 11:11). A faith that does not rely on Jesus for all things is a faith worthy to be traded in on another.

**Intimacy (vv. 20-22).** Think of the times you have had guests over for a meal. Usually they are people that you know well. The conversation is relaxing and the company is that which you do not mind having.

Hardly ever would you have someone in your home who is a stranger. We would not feel right inviting someone into our private space if we did not know them intimately. Jesus

desires for Laodicea to spend time with Him on a personal level. He obviously knows their attitudes and hearts, which begs the question: What would Jesus discuss over this meal?

When someone is in our homes, the small talk is pleasant and even funny. Yet, Jesus has already admitted that these Laodiceans make Him sick. Now He wants to get together with them? This intimate knowledge is coupled with a promise that only Jesus can give.

He alone can conquer sorry attitudes and sinful hearts because He already has through His death. He is now rightly intimate with God the Father and is alone able to invite others to join in that relationship.

Reread these selling points listed in the text. It is trite to say that Jesus offers better "gas mileage" than other religious figures. Of course, His safety features are tried and true whereas all other faith leaders are faulty by comparison.

It is better for us to see a world lost and in need of a Savior who promises that we do not need to provide for ourselves, and on Whom we can rely for all earthly and eternal needs. We have a God that is so in love with us that He knows our failures yet loves us anyway.

Carmaker Lee Iacocca famously said, "If you can find a better car, then buy it." Our message mirrors those words, in that if the lot can find a better Savior, then they should follow him.

Of course, we know that our cup holders are far better.

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