

Week 6

Group Discussion Questions - Philadelphia

CONNECT

Have you ever been part of any endurance competition such as a 5K race, a half or full marathon, or a tug of war? Maybe your endurance challenge was part of a team sport such as running laps at football or soccer practice or suicide sprints at basketball practice? Endurance challenges can also be a battle of the mind or will, such as a game of chess, staying focused during a long class or meeting, or outlasting your child at the dinner table who won't eat their vegetables. In any of these cases, there is a pain tolerance you have to endure. Share your endurance story and what motivated you to complete it.

CONSIDER

Watch this week's Groups video at mynorthside.com/dearchurch. **What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon and/or daily devotions this week?**

CHRIST

Read Revelation 3:7-13.

This letter to the church in Philadelphia begins with the truth that Jesus opens doors that no one can shut and shuts doors no one can open. The famous theologian C.S. Lewis said that "obedience is the key that opens every door."³⁷ However, the word obedience has such a negative connotation in 21st century America, the "land of the free." Many Americans have translated this motto to mean that they can do whatever they want, whenever they want. As Americans, we do not want anyone telling us what to do—not even God. **How has culture today shaped our view of obedience as being negative? How has that challenged our view of Scripture and God's authority?**

In verse 10, Jesus says to the church in Philadelphia, "*Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world.*" Many of us have been challenged during the past few years during this global pandemic, something that certainly can be considered a trial that has come on the whole world. **How has God kept or sustained you during this time?**

Verse 12 says that to "*the one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it.*" A pillar is defined as "a person regarded as reliably providing essential support." **How would you define a pillar from a spiritual standpoint? Based on that definition, is a pillar something you would aspire to be?**

Take a moment to reread verses 11-12 now as a group.

The overriding message to the church in Philadelphia is to hold on or hold fast. This leads

us to several questions for the Philadelphians and consequently for us today:

- What are we holding on to?
- How long do we have to hold on?
- What is our reward if we do hold on?

Verse 11 tells the church to “*hold on to what you have.*”

- What did the church in Philadelphia have to hold onto? One of the doors of opportunity they had to hold onto was to be a witness to Christ in that area. This is an opportunity they did not take lightly, and neither should we.
- How long did they have to hold on? Not long. Jesus said, “*I am coming soon.*” This message holds true for us today.
- What was their reward? Verse 11 says to hold on to what you have “*so that no one will take your crown.*” Their reward and ours is a victor’s crown in Heaven.

Would you say you have a healthy view of what you are holding onto and what your reward is when you do hold on?

CALLING

Take a moment in your group to discuss which of the four areas of your spiritual life listed below you feel like you are just “holding on” to:

- **Your prayer life?**
- **Your Bible reading?**
- **Your church attendance?**
- **Your participation in or being leader of a Life Group?**

This portion of Scripture we’ve been studying in Revelation and the message to the church in Philadelphia shows the great rewards in store for us if we just hang on, but **how can we turn any of the areas listed above into an area in which we are not just surviving, but thriving? Make a decision today to focus on one of the areas to commit to fully in the next 30 days. Which area did you choose to focus on?**

Daily Devotions

Take the time to read the daily devotions associated with this study. Then, to continue with this spiritual habit of daily devotion with God, text JOINGOD to 81411 or use the Study tab in the Northside App to receive devotions on a daily basis moving forward.

Further Study & Reflection

Read *Holding on When You Want to Let Go* by Sheila Walsh.

Memorize

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

**FAMILY
CONVERSATION
STARTERS**

