

MESSAGES

NOT TO BE MISSED!

7 LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

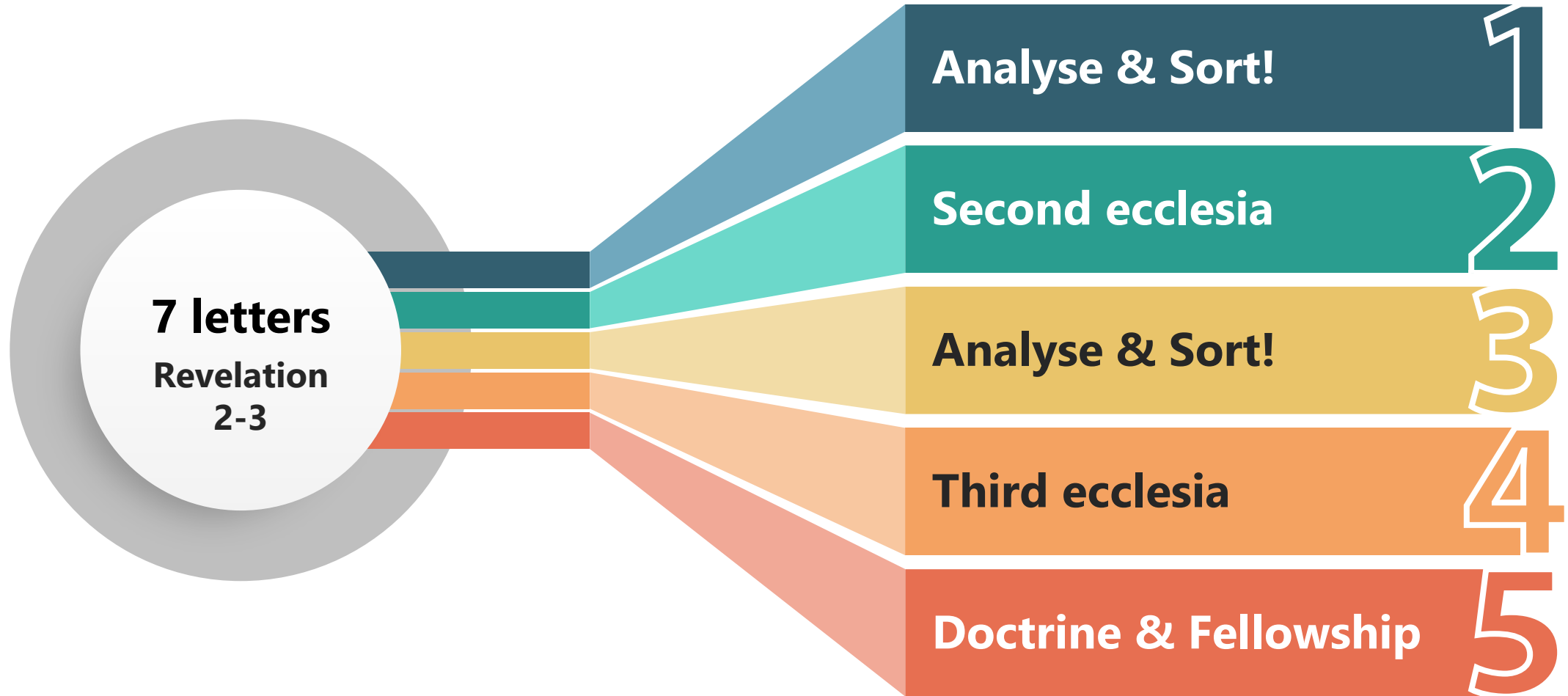


Class 3: Doctrine & Fellowship



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AGENDA



MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED!

SORTING THE ECCLESIAS (i.e. positive to negative)

1

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

2

3

Smyrna Philadelphia

4

5

6

Ephesus Pergamos Thyatira Sardis Laodicea

7

SORTING THE ECCLESIAS (i.e. positive to negative)

1

Smyrna

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

2

Philadelphia

2. Are there any concerns?

3

4

5

6

Ephesus Pergamos Thyatira Sardis Laodicea

7

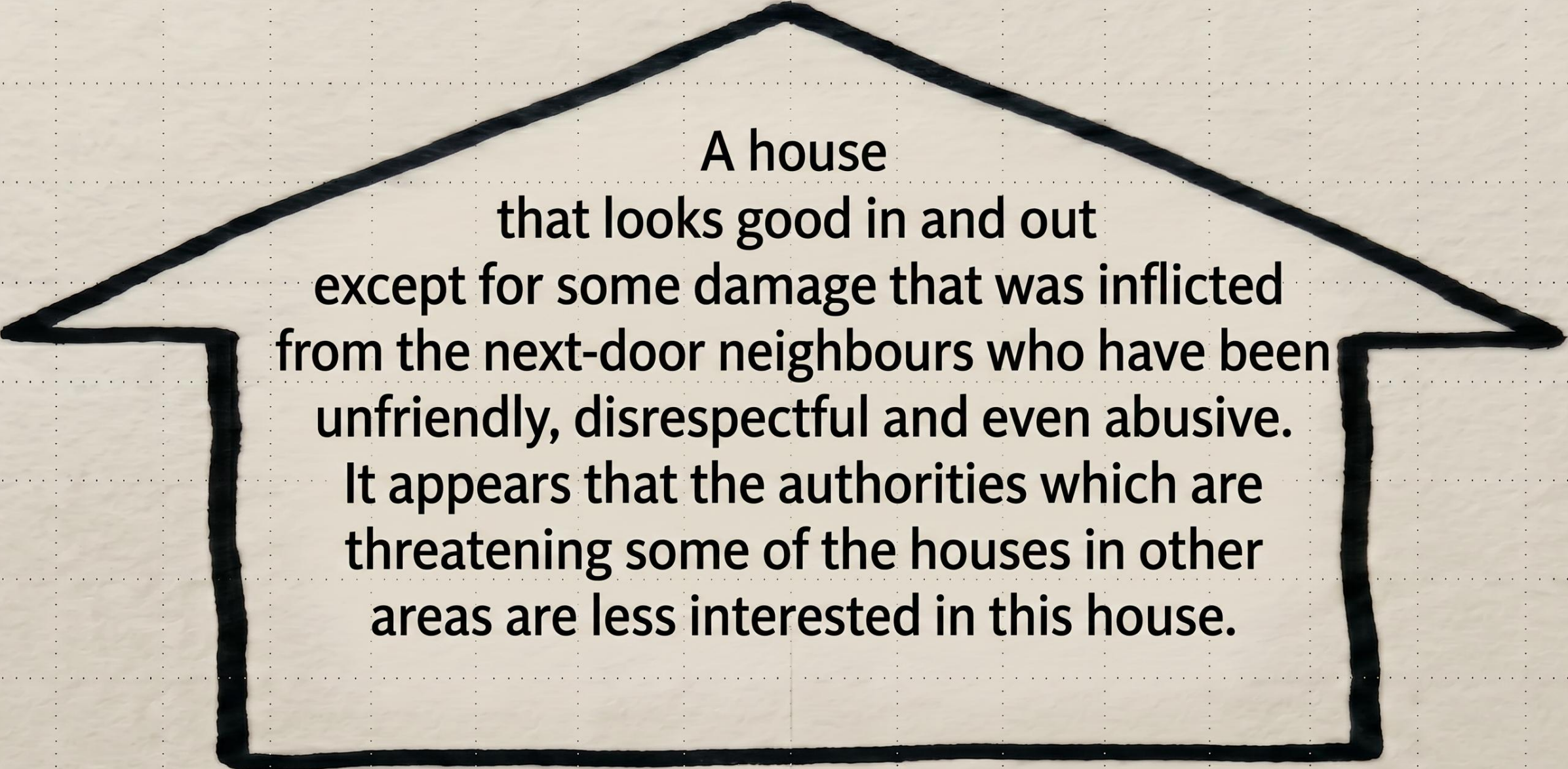
Philadelphia (3:7-13)

kept the Lord's word and
did not deny his name

Positive

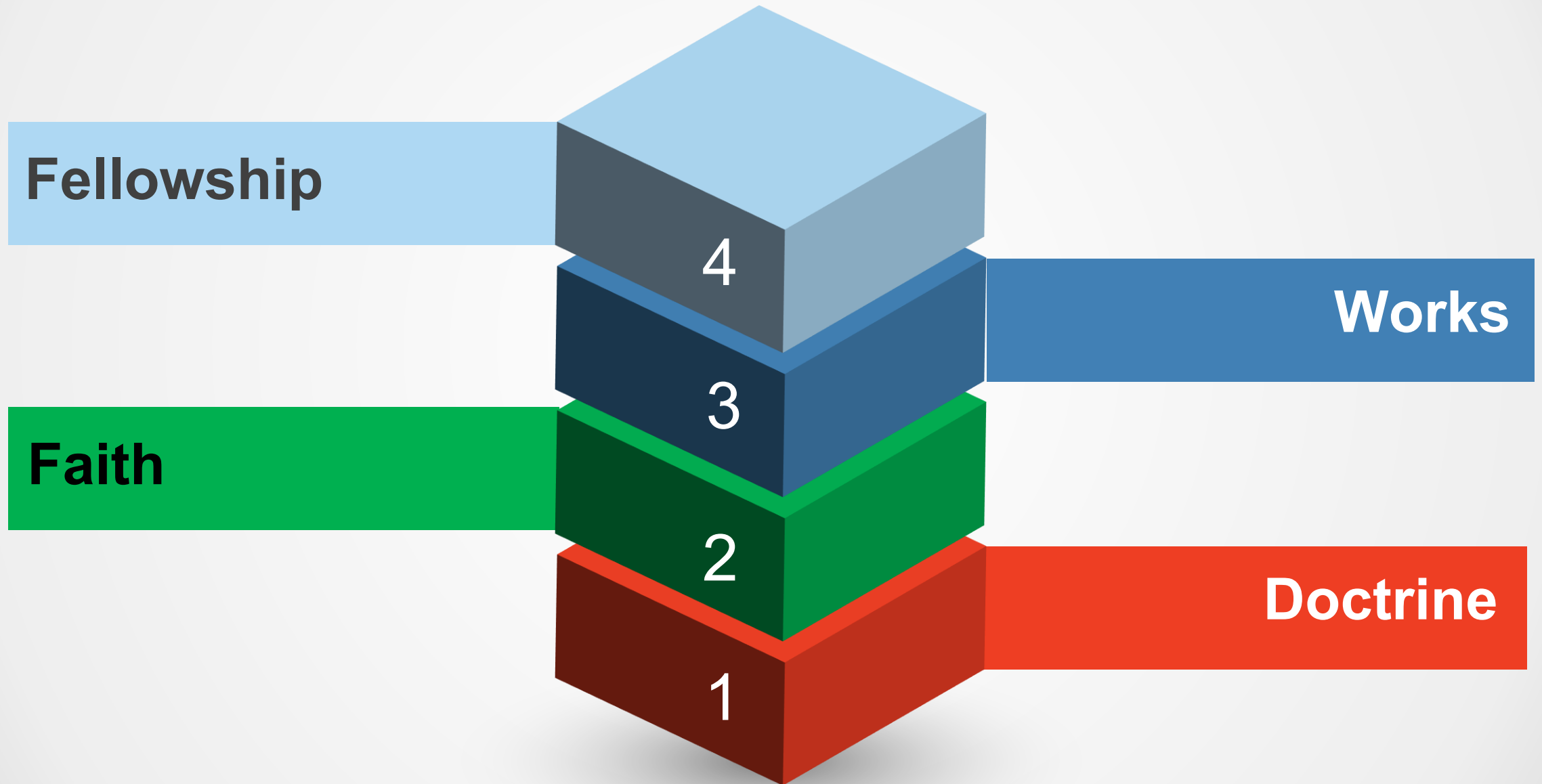
Concern
"little
strength"

Negative



A house
that looks good in and out
except for some damage that was inflicted
from the next-door neighbours who have been
unfriendly, disrespectful and even abusive.
It appears that the authorities which are
threatening some of the houses in other
areas are less interested in this house.

Building Blocks of the Ecclesia



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Smyrna

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

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Philadelphia

2. Are there any concerns?

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Ephesus Pergamos Thyatira Sardis Laodicea

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SORTING THE ECCLESIAS (i.e. positive to negative)

1

Smyrna

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

2

Philadelphia

2. Are there any concerns?

3. Did they receive any commendation?

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4

Ephesus

Pergamos

Thyatira

5

6

Sardis Laodicea

7

SORTING THE ECCLESIAS (i.e. positive to negative)

1

Smyrna

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

2

Philadelphia

2. Are there any concerns?

3. Did they receive any commendation?

3

4. Christ's action against the whole ecclesia

4

Pergamos Thyatira

5

Ephesus

6

Sardis Laodicea

7

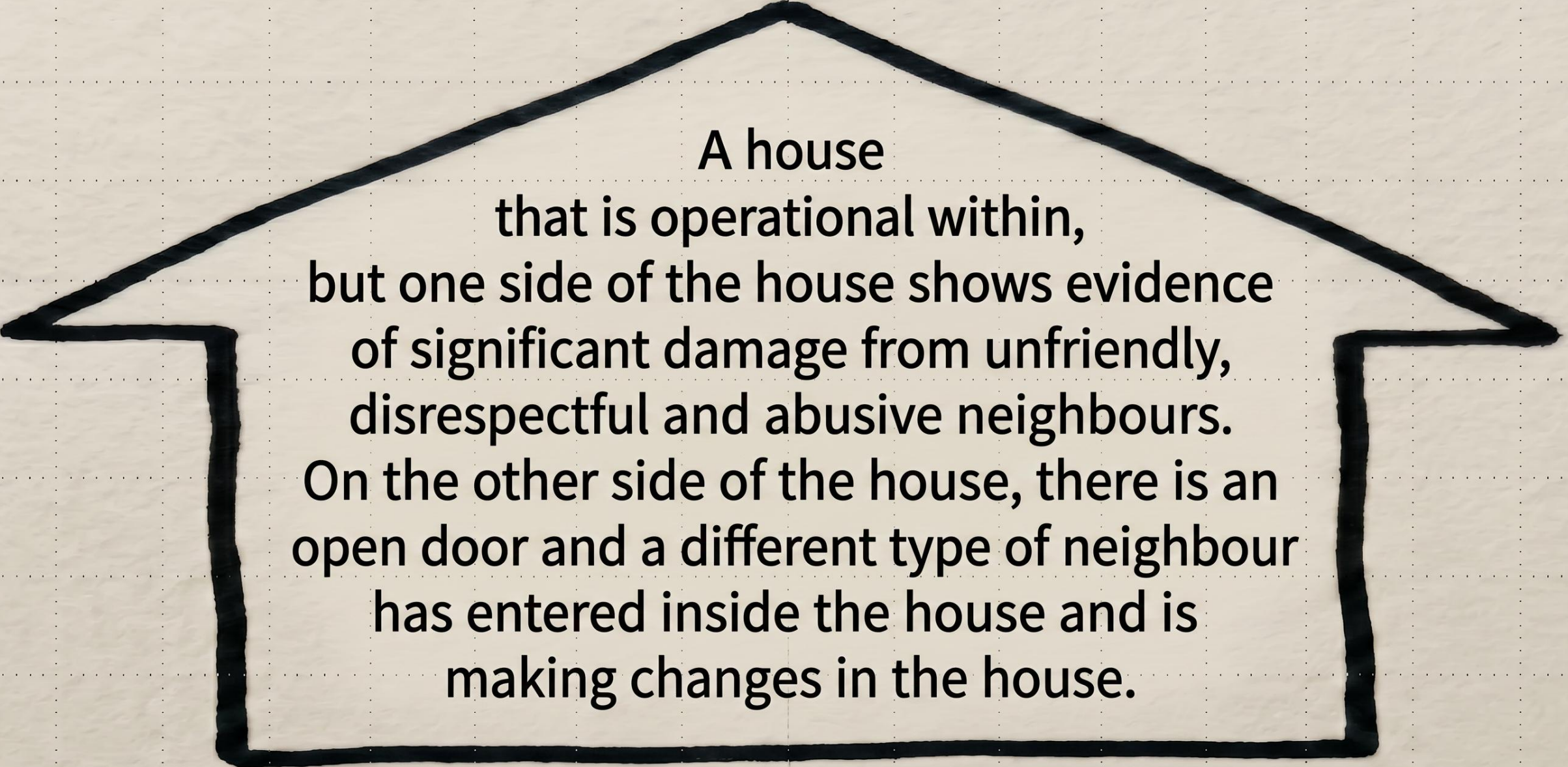
Pergamos (2:12-17)

did not deny the Lord's name

Positive

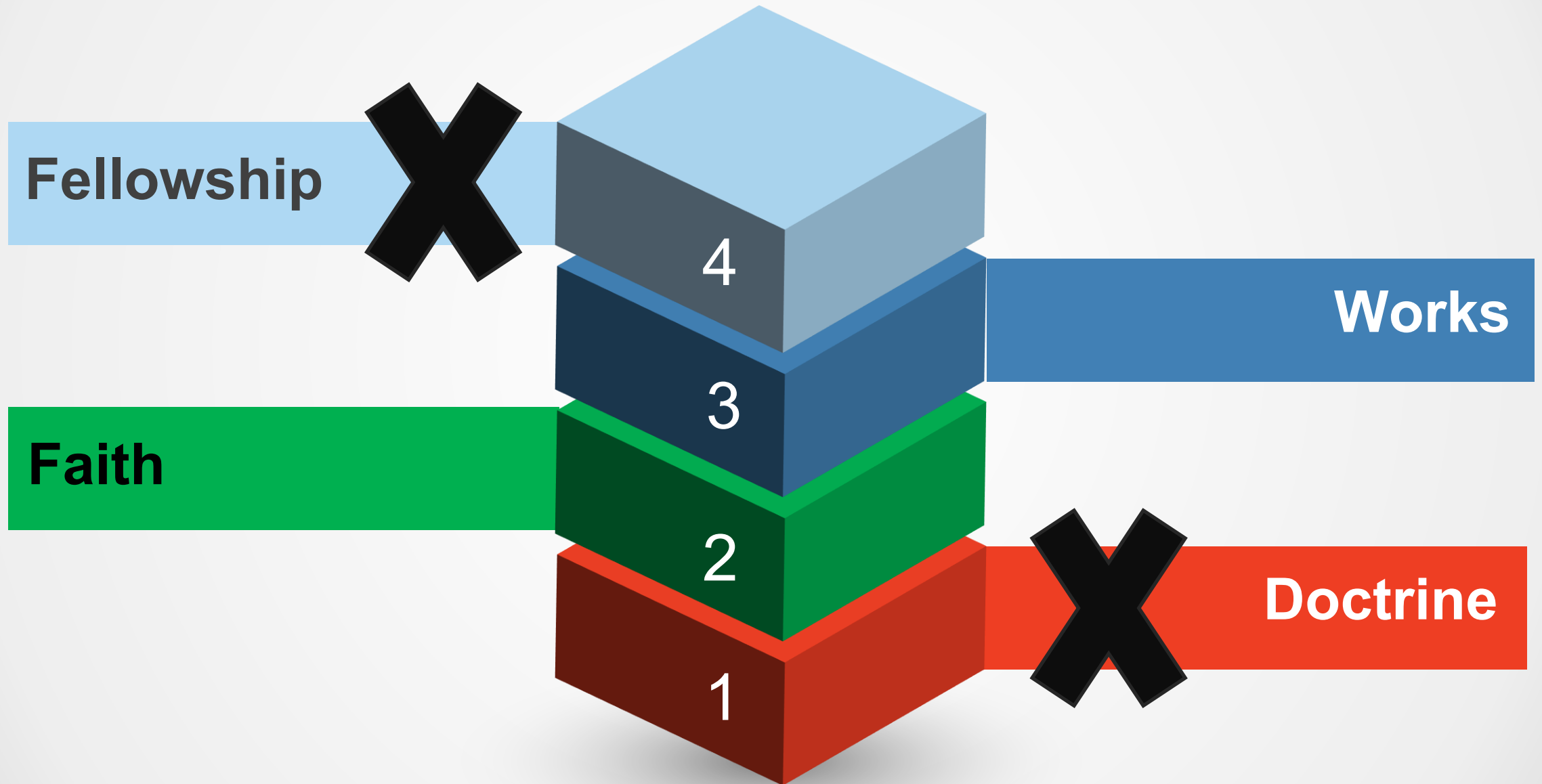
Negative

**tolerated people who
believed error**



A house
that is operational within,
but one side of the house shows evidence
of significant damage from unfriendly,
disrespectful and abusive neighbours.
On the other side of the house, there is an
open door and a different type of neighbour
has entered inside the house and is
making changes in the house.

Building Blocks of the Ecclesia - Pergamos



Doctrine and Fellowship (1951)

“Is Doctrine Important?

Many people today do not like doctrine. They say differences of opinion about doctrine have caused much debate and controversy. They say that the many divisions in the Church have been caused by debate about doctrine. **Doctrine is not so important after all. What is important is a good Christian life.** So runs their argument.” (Kuiper, pg15)

Doctrine & Fellowship

“An apologist is one who defends what he believes to be the truth. In order to explain Christianity to the educated and cultured heathen and in order to defend it against attacks, they were compelled to make a deeper study of the Bible. In that way the Church made progress in the understanding of Christian truth.” (Kuiper, pg16)

Doctrine & Fellowship

“In the last half of the second century two heresies (departures from the truth) became a menace. They were Gnosticism and Montanism. Gnosticism went so far as to maintain that Christ never dwelt on this earth in human form...Right doctrine is important. Wrong doctrine will hurt the Church. The Church cannot live with false doctrine. So the last half of the second century was a time of tremendous crisis for the Church.”

(Kuiper, pg17)

Doctrine & Fellowship

“How keenly the Church felt the deadly nature of these heresies you can tell from the following incident. One of the leading Gnostics was a certain Marcion. After he made his fortune in Constantinople, he moved to Rome. He gave many thousands of dollars to charity, but he also made strong propaganda for his Gnostic ideas, and gained many followers among the members of the church in Rome.” (Kuiper, pg17)

Doctrine & Fellowship

“Polycarp, bishop of the church in Smyrna, at one time made a visit to Rome. Marcion and Polycarp had known each other very well back East. When Polycarp happened to come across Marcion on the street, he was going to pass on without speaking. Marcion stopped him and said, “Don’t you know me any more, Polycarp?” “Yes,” answered Polycarp, “I know who you are. You are the first-born of Satan.” (Kuiper, pg17)

Doctrine & Fellowship

“Irenaeus was born sometime between 115 and 142. He was reared in Smyrna. There he saw Polycarp and heard him preach. From Smyrna he moved to Lyons in Gaul, now France, in the church of which city he became bishop. In the year 200 he suffered a martyr’s death. Irenaeus gave much thought to the Scriptural teaching about Christ. The beginnings of a sound doctrine about Christ are to be found his book *Against Heresies*.”

(Kuiper, pg17)

Council of Nicaea (325AD)

“Council of Nicaea...There were lessons to be drawn from the experience, but few had learned them.

Consensus cannot be created by verbal formulas.

Serious disputes are seldom resolved without a genuine change in the parties' thinking. And a false consensus may be more productive of conflict than an honest disagreement.” (Rubenstein, pg 104)

Council of Nicaea (325AD)

“Survival, not doctrinal purity, had been the order of the day...The contradictions between the ideals of behaviour represented by Jesus Christ’s life and the requirements of holding office in the fourth-century Church were agonizing. The bishops’ worldly duties and ambitions often involved them in political intrigue, financial chicanery, abuse of legal processes, and sheer thuggery against their opponents...” (Rubenstein, pg 73, 101)

“Receive”

There is a scriptural responsibility to “receive” (Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1-2) brethren commended to us, and to “not receive” (2 John 10) those with a different doctrinal basis.

We announce visitors and offer the emblems to those with whom we have fellowship (1 John 1). In cases, where someone partakes of the emblems and should not, we would follow the advice of scripture and follow up with the individual in a Christ-like spirit.

“Withdrawal”

We have a responsibility to attempt reconciliation in the case of significant error to save our brethren (Matthew 18: 15-20; James 5:19-20, Jude 22). We must follow the scriptural process with multiple attempts and stages (Matthew 18:15-20, Titus 3:10). Withdrawal itself is an attempt to educate and save (1 Tim. 1:20, 1 Cor. 5:5).

“Withdrawal”

“Leaven”, “gangrene” must be dealt with promptly otherwise it spreads and has a detrimental impact on others (1 Cor. 5:6-8, 11-13; Gal. 5:9, 12; 2 Tim. 2:17-18).

Withdrawal is a command for serious doctrinal or behavioral issues (1 Tim.6:3-5; Tit.3:10; 1 Tim. 1:20 with 2 Tim 2:17; 2 Thes. 3:6,14; Rev. 2:14-15).

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” Gal. 5:9



MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED

PHILADELPHIA

- 1. The Lord is kind to us even at the ecclesial level, he recognizes our strength and will not try an ecclesia beyond what they are able to bear.**

MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED

PERGAMOS

- 1. We must hold the truth, but we must not hold them in fellowship who have fundamentally different doctrine.**

EXERCISE #2

NAME THE ECCLESIA

