

MESSAGES

NOT TO BE MISSED!

7 LETTERS TO THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

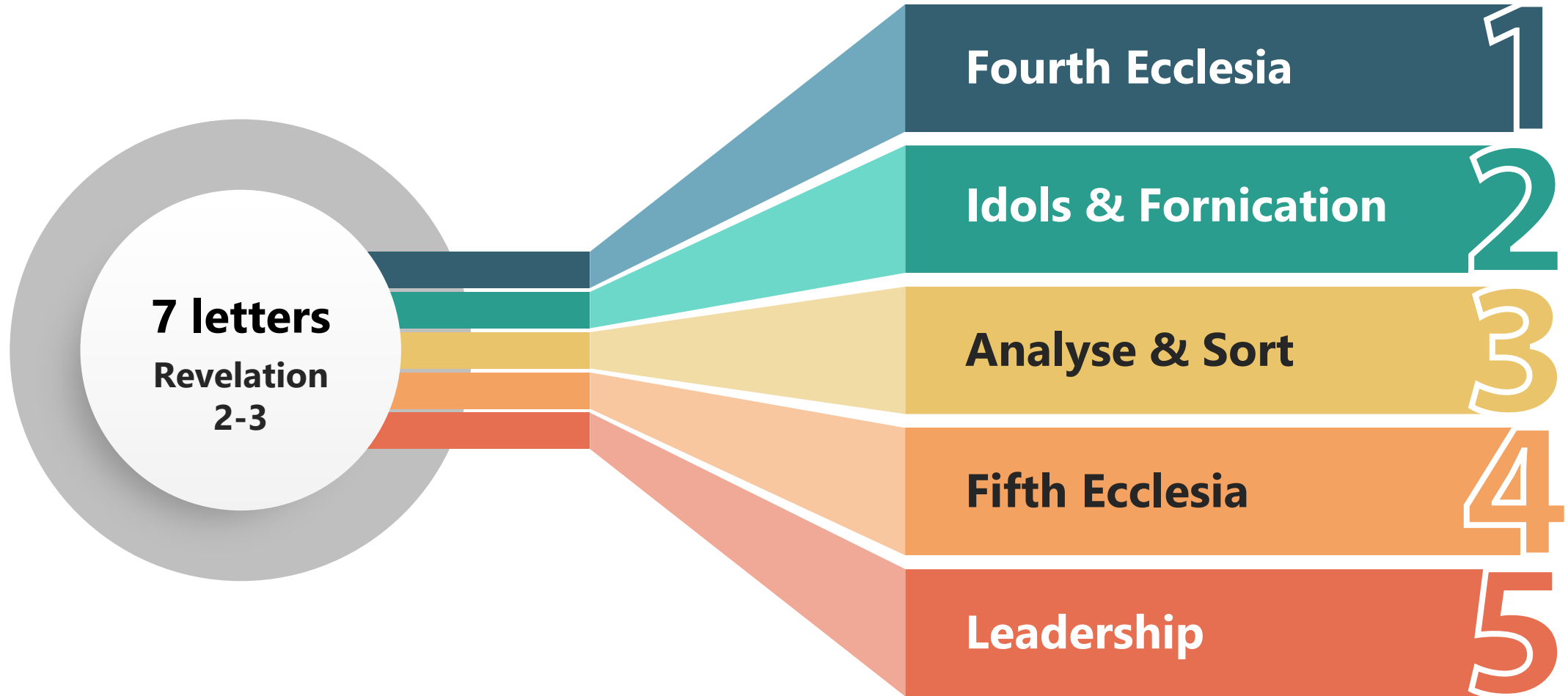


Class 4: Idolatry & Leadership



www.ChristadelphianVideo.org

AGENDA



MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED!

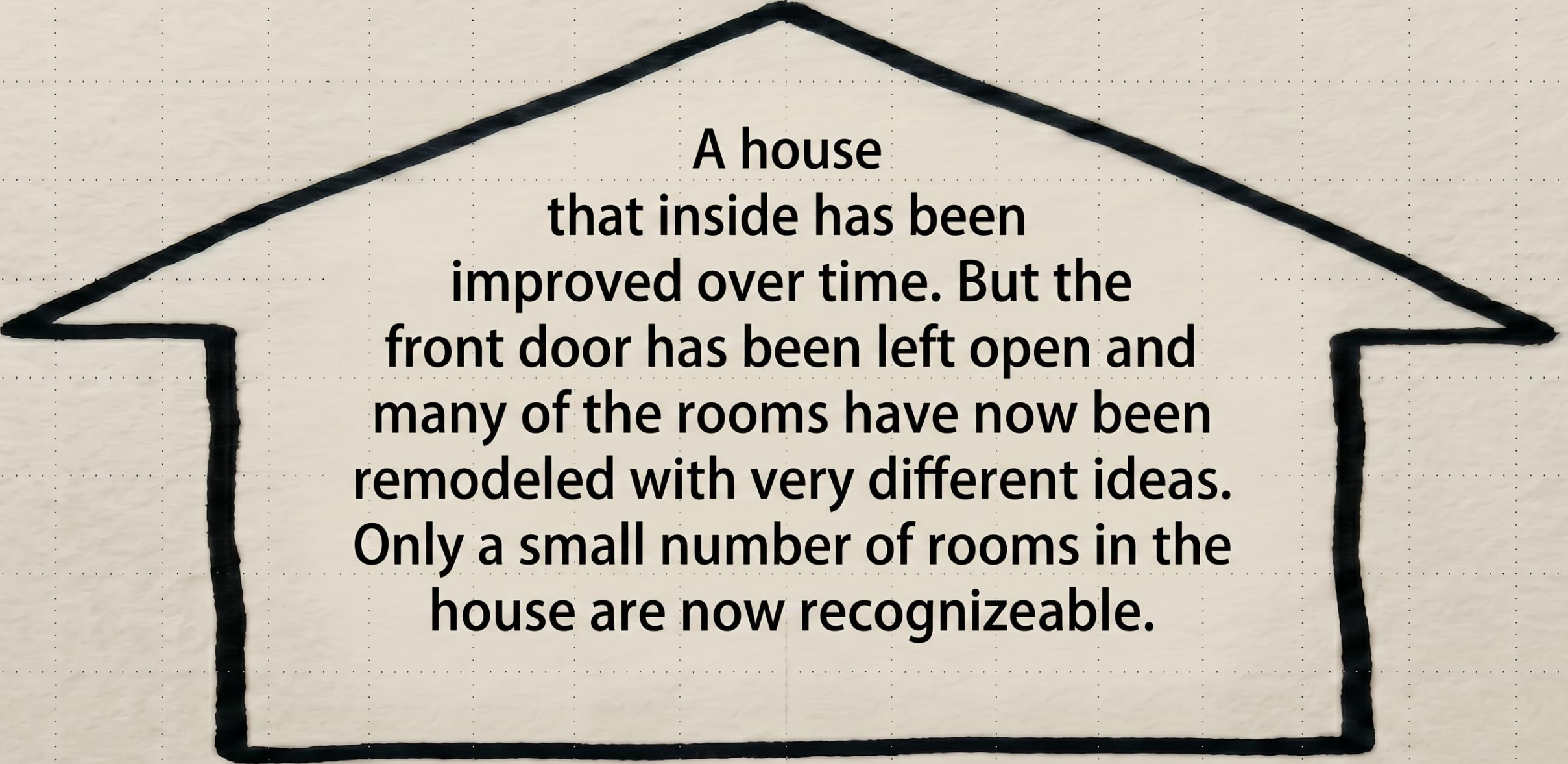
Thyatira (2:18-29)

**love, service, faith,
endurance, works have
increased**

Positive

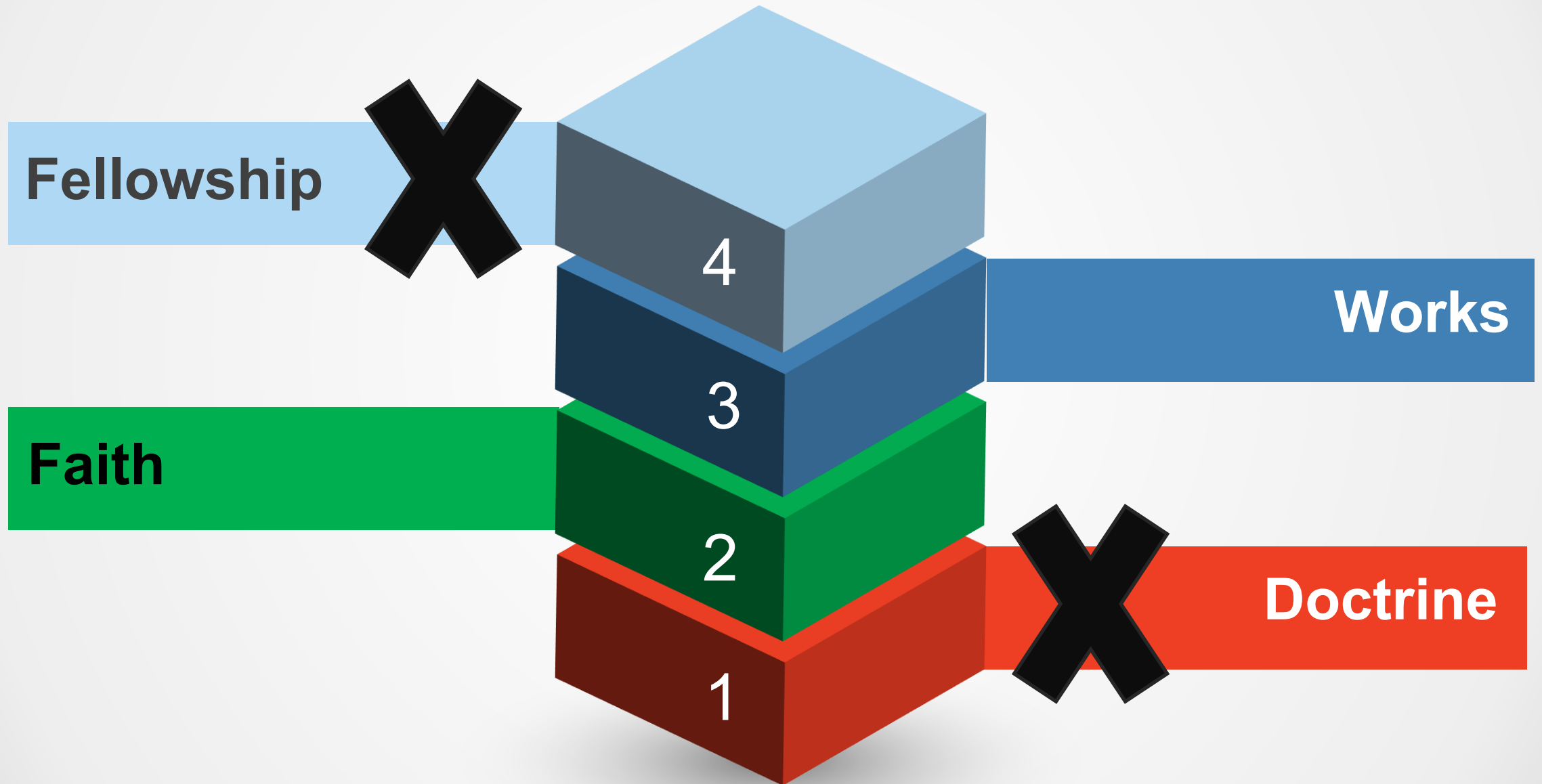
Negative

**tolerated people who
believed error and allowed
them to teach and to seduce
most of the ecclesia**



A house
that inside has been
improved over time. But the
front door has been left open and
many of the rooms have now been
remodeled with very different ideas.
Only a small number of rooms in the
house are now recognizeable.

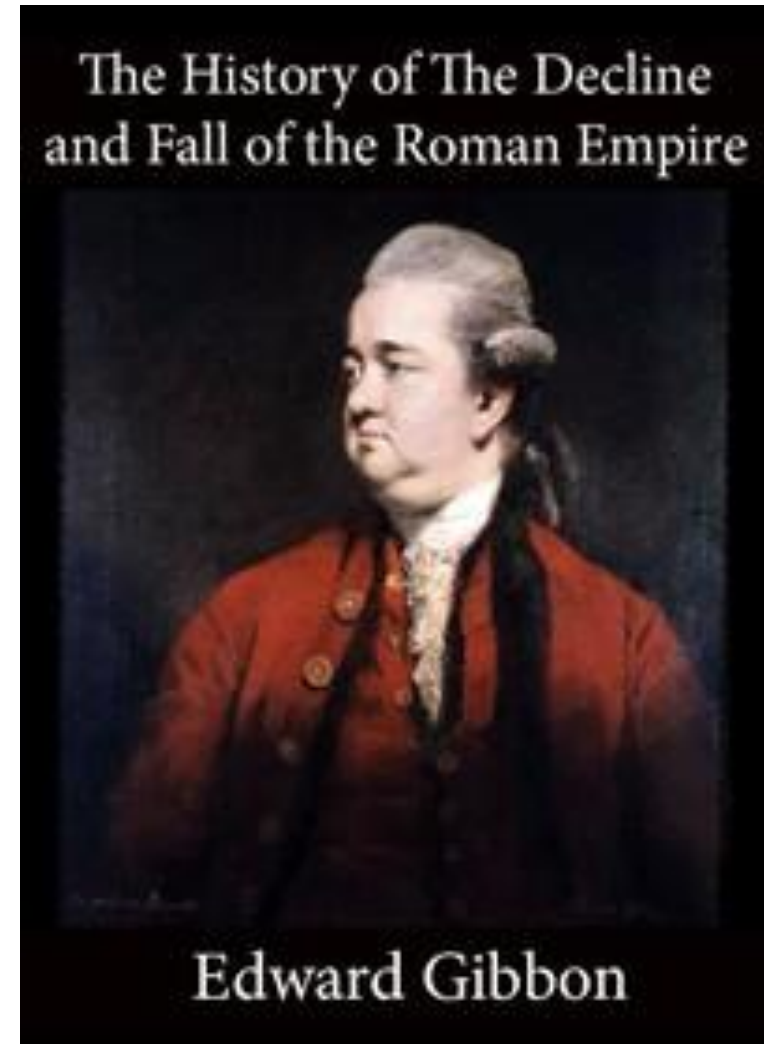
Building Blocks of the Ecclesia - Thyatira



Idolatry in the Roman World

“It was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure and undefiled by the practice of idolatry.”

**(Gibbon: Chapter XV: Progress Of The Christian Religion.—
Part III. P1)**



Idolatry in the Roman World

“The religion of the nations was not merely a speculative doctrine professed in the schools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society...”
(Gibbon: Chapter XV: Progress Of The Christian Religion.—Part III. P1)

Idolatry in the Roman World

“The Christians, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness.”

(Gibbon: Chapter XV: Progress Of The Christian Religion.—Part III. P1)

Escaping Idolatry? Monasticism

“Christian monasticism began in Egypt. Its founder was Anthony of Thebes. About the year 270 he took up the life of a monk in his native village. After some fifteen years he went to live alone in a cave in the desert, and thus became known as a *hermit*, one who withdraws from the world and lives alone. Many followed his example. Others lived together in monasteries, in which each monk had his cell. From Egypt monasticism spread rapidly over the entire East.” (Kuiper pg. 45)

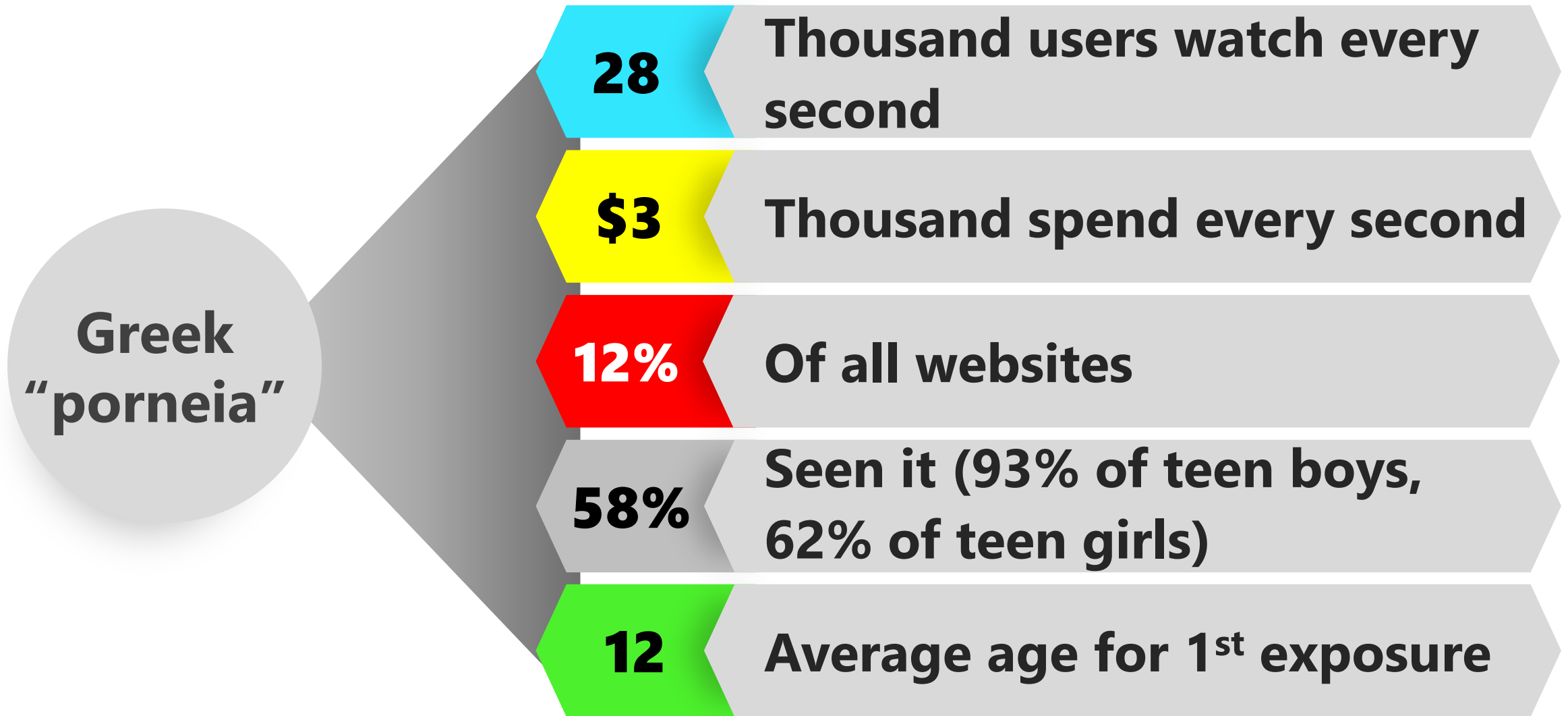
Escaping Idolatry? Monasticism

“In Syria a certain Simon lived thirty years, until the very day of his death, on **top of a pillar or stylus. He built several pillars, each one higher than the one before. The last pillar was sixty feet high and the top four feet square. He was known as Simon Stylites. Between the fifth and the twelfth centuries **there were many pillar saints** in Syria.**

Athanasius introduced monasticism into the West. Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine did much to promote it. Monasticism was to be one of the outstanding features of the life of the Middle Ages.”

(Kuiper pg. 45)

FORNICATION



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

1

Smyrna

1. Did they receive any condemnation?

2

Philadelphia

2. Are there any concerns?

3

3. Did they receive any commendation?

4. Christ's action against the whole ecclesia

4

Pergamos Thyatira

5

Ephesus

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

Pergamos

3. Did they receive any commendation?

3

4. Christ's action against the whole ecclesia

5. Ecclesia no longer capable of recovering apostates

4

Thyatira

5

Ephesus

6

Sardis Laodicea

7

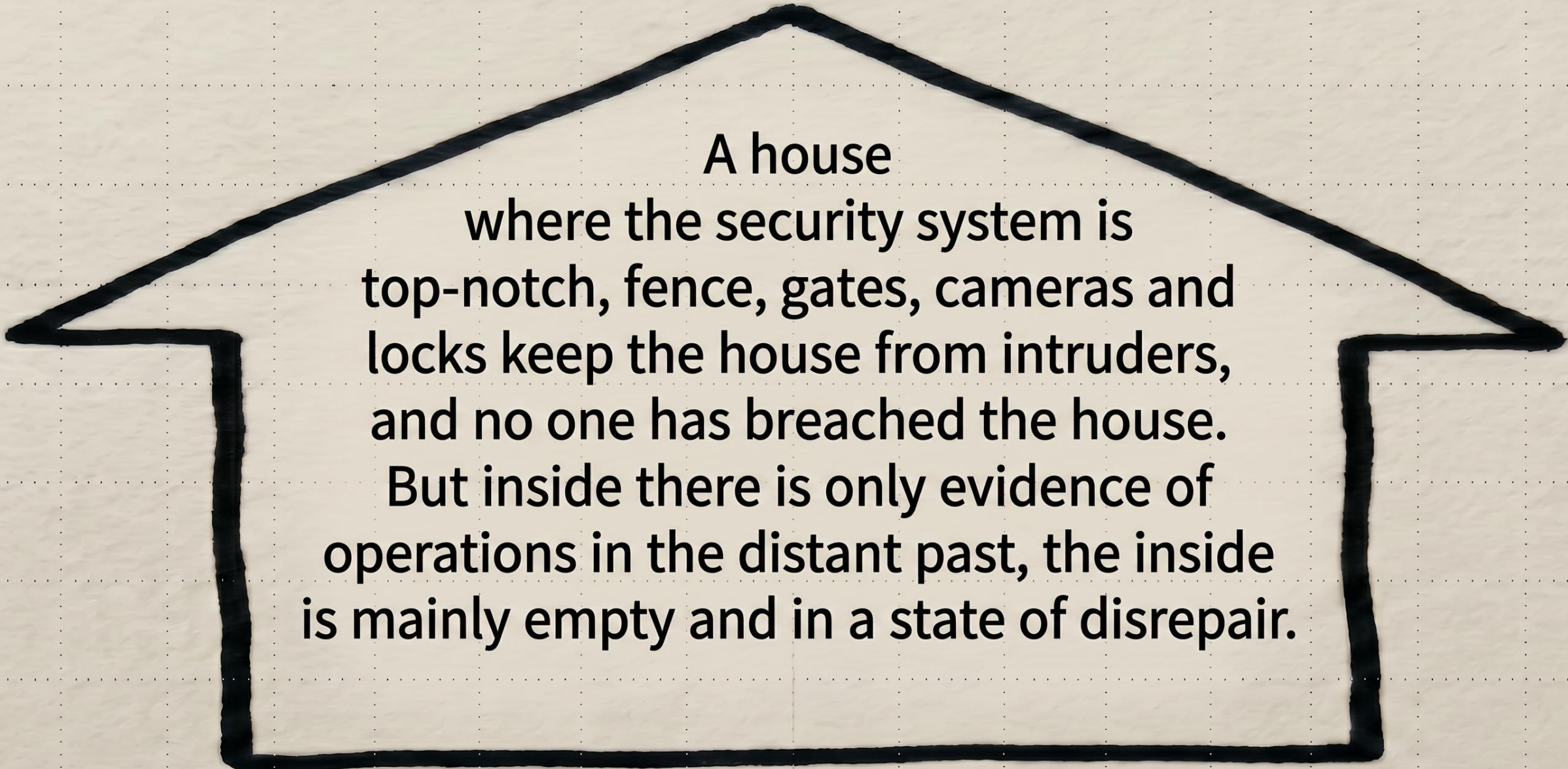
Ephesus (2:1-7)

**hard working ecclesia, that
dealt unwaveringly with
people who were not true in
motive and in deed**

Positive

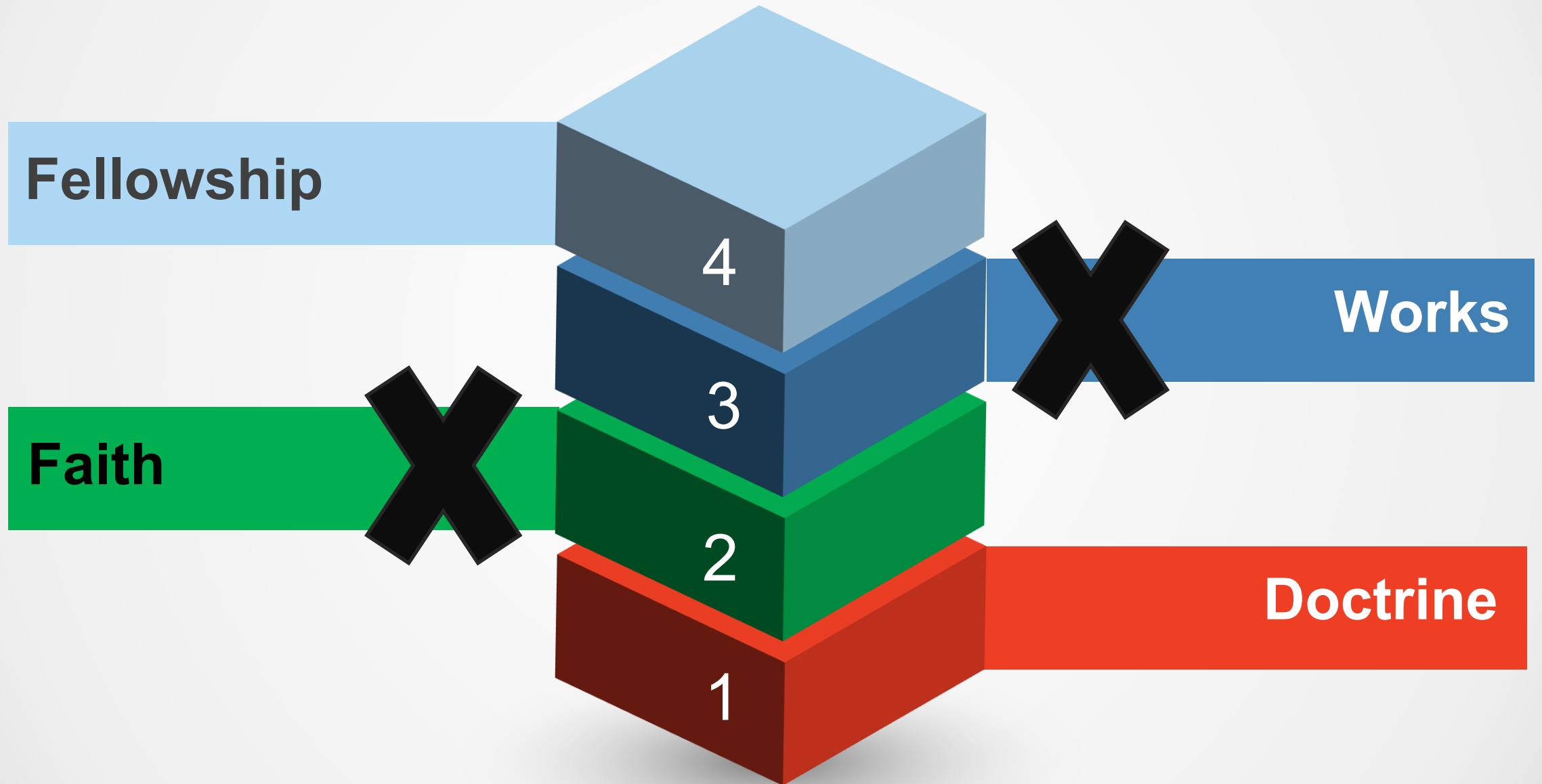
**love and works had declined to
unacceptable levels**

Negative



A house
where the security system is
top-notch, fence, gates, cameras and
locks keep the house from intruders,
and no one has breached the house.
But inside there is only evidence of
operations in the distant past, the inside
is mainly empty and in a state of disrepair.

Building Blocks of the Ecclesia - Ephesus



Leadership

“Out of the Church’s struggle with the heresies of Gnosticism and Montanism came three things: a creed, a canon, and **an organization. All three of these have been of very great and lasting significance for the Church.”**

(Kuiper, pg17)

Leadership

“At first the organization of the Church was very simple. The officers were the elders and deacons. The elders were known as presbyters, since presbyter is the Greek word for “elder”.” (Kuiper, pg 19)

Leadership

“So the other presbyters gradually became subordinate to the presbyter who was their overseer, or bishop, and the bishop came to rule the church alone. The Greek word for a man who rules alone is “monarch”. For that reason these bishops, who came to have all the authority in a church, were called monarchical bishops.” (Kuiper, pg 19)

Leadership

“Just exactly when the Church came to have bishops we do not know. The development of the episcopal form of church organization or government came about gradually.

It came about in some cities sooner than in others. Churches in certain cities had monarchical bishops before the church in Rome had such a bishop...By the middle of the second century practically all churches had monarchical bishops.” (Kuiper, pg 20)

Leadership

“The bishops were supposed to be the successors of the apostles. That idea helped immensely to clothe the bishops with great authority. Ignatius considered the bishop to be the great bond of church unity and the great defense against heresy. To the church in Philadelphia he wrote, “Do ye all follow your bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Do nothing without the bishop.”

(Kuiper, pg 21)

Leadership

“He continued: “He who is not in the Church of Christ is not a Christian. He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother. There is no salvation outside the Church. The Church is based on the unity of the bishops. The bishop is the Church, and the Church is in the bishop. If anyone is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church.” (Kuiper, pg 21)

Leadership

“Every church, or perhaps it would be better to say every diocese, had its bishop. At first all bishops were of the same rank. No bishop had any judicial power over any other bishops. Step by step, one bishop, the bishop of Rome, acquired power over other bishops and in that way became pope.” (Kuiper, pg 39)

Ecclesial Guide #17

“One principle ought to permeate all appointments in the house of Christ, and that is the one laid down by Christ, when speaking of the **exercise of authority of one Gentile over another, he said, “IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU.”For this reason, it is wise to speak of them all, in whatever capacity, as **“serving brethren.”** For the same reason, it is inexpedient to employ any technical term around which ideas of personal importance are liable to gather, or which have a tendency to create a cold officialism and obscure the family relation to the truth.”**

Ecclesial Guide #17

“The committee,” for example, or “the executive,” “registrar,” &c., is an abstraction which is liable to do this. It is wise to attach the term “brother” or “brethren” to every office.”...its wholesome effect in helping to preserve the family unity of the body of Christ. It keeps in view the fact that official brethren are only brethren performing an office for the good of the rest, and to some extent shuts the door against the corruption which generated the apostacy, and developed the clerical usurpation.”

Ecclesial Guide #18

“This feature, with many other beautiful features originally appertaining to the house of Christ, has disappeared from the religious systems around us, bearing the name of Christ. Having returned to it, let us hold on to it. **There must be no authority, only service... The ecclesia does not appoint masters, but servants. In principle, **the ecclesia is the doer of everything**; but, as it is impossible, it can, in its collective capacity, do the things that are to be done, it **delegates to individual members** the duty of doing them in its behalf.”**

Ecclesial Guide #20

“It is next important, in making this choice, that the right of the whole ecclesia to control proceedings should not be absolutely surrendered into the hands of those chosen. To do this would be to appoint masters and not servants, and lay a foundation for the evils that have come from clerical domination...the ecclesia ought to retain a power of regulation and control...periodical approbation of the general body...it is in the power of the ecclesia to repudiate them...giving the arranging brethren the power to carry out their decisions at once: and the general body the power of veto only as regards the future.”

MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED - THYATIRA

- 1. We can be amazing in love, service, faith, endurance and works and yet destroyed with harmful teaching and practices.**
- 2. We are encouraged to hold fast away from apostacy.**
- 3. Idols that take our hearts and time, fornication and every form of wicked lust present a great threat.**

MESSAGES NOT TO BE MISSED - EPHESUS

- 1. We can be amazing at hating evil and keeping the evil people out, but if our love and works are deficient then we are of no value to the Lord.**
- 2. Leaders are subject to the ecclesia; they are not inherently authoritative.**