

**Dear Future Church - Smyrna**  
*Scripture & Background Info for the week of Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>.*

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

***Revelation 2:8-11 Context***

“The revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1) was probably written by the apostle John while in exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of present-day Turkey. It was addressed to seven actual churches. Revelation begins with letters from Christ himself to these churches, letters that include commendation, criticism, and comfort. Then comes a long series of visions of judgment on the wicked, all in highly symbolic language. The church is depicted under great distress but is assured of the final triumph of Jesus as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16), bringing to an end the rebellion of humanity and ushering in “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1), where God himself will reign forever and ever (11:15). Revelation was probably written a.d. 95–96. (ESV Study Bible)

*The City of Smyrna*

The second letter was addressed to Smyrna, a large and wealthy city 35 miles north of Ephesus. Like Ephesus, it was a seaport. In contrast to Ephesus, which today is a deserted ruin, Smyrna is still a large seaport with a present population of about 200,000. Christ described Himself as the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. Christ is portrayed as the eternal One (cf. 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13) who suffered death at the hands of His persecutors and then was resurrected from the grave (cf. 1:5). These aspects of Christ were especially relevant to the Christians at Smyrna who, like Christ in His death, were experiencing severe persecution. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

*Questions for Discussion*

1. In verse 10, John warns that they are about to be tested. How have you personally experienced testing in your faith? How is the persecution we face in our current culture different than what the believers in Smyrna were facing?
2. The name of this city means “myrrh” which was an ordinary perfume. When myrrh was put under pressure, it released a sweet aroma. How does this relate to the church in Smyrna who were suffering for their faith? What about their example can we be a source of encouragement for us today?
3. Who in your life has been a positive example, who displayed faithfulness to the Lord when they were under pressure?
4. What are some best practices in offering support to those who are experiencing pressure? How can we be a source of blessing and strength for others who are under pressure?