

## Calibrate: Be Odd But Not At Odds Leader Guide

### Breaking the Ice

1. Play Two Truths and a Lie. Each person takes turns sharing two truths about themselves along with one thing that is not true about themselves. The key is to share all three things (2 truth + 1 lie) like they are all truths. Then people guess which one is the lie. You're bound to find out some unexpected (maybe even odd) things about one another!

### Getting Started

1. Read Revelation 2:8. How does Jesus describe Himself here? Why do you think this is important in light of the persecution that the church is facing?  
*Jesus is described as the first and last; the one who was dead and came to life. This reminds the people that death could not hold him down and it will not hold those who follow him down either.*
2. Read Revelation 2:9. What does it mean that those in the church of Smyrna are in poverty, but they are really rich?  
*While their external circumstances would suggest that they are poor, Jesus could see their wealth of understanding and richness of their hearts. There are all types of wealth – you can be rich in mercy, rich in kindness, rich in relationships, etc.*
3. Read Revelation 2:12-17. There are some things that Jesus has against the church in Pergamum, including that there are some that hold to the doctrine of Balaam. Who is Balaam and what are his doctrines?  
*This passage gives some commentary to what this is referring to: "to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality." Read Numbers 22-24 for more insight. You can point your group to consult this passage to find out who Balaam was and what he advised Balak to do in more detail. Essentially, Balaam is the prototype for false and corrupt teachers. He combined the sins of immorality and idolatry to please Balak.*

### Digging Deeper

1. Re-read Revelation 2:9. What do you think is more valuable – the external wealth a person can have or the internal/spiritual wealth a person can have? What type of 'rich' matters most? Discuss.

2. Smyrna was praised for their commitment to stay faithful in the face of great opposition. Pergamum, on the other hand, was praised for their faithfulness but also corrected for the areas that they compromised in. What are some of the cultural pressures that you think cause Christians to compromise the most? What do you see Christians being most tempted to conform to these days?
3. There is another extreme that Christians can move to as they seek to heed this correction - they can become harsh, aggressive, and obstinate in the name of "standing for the truth", especially in political spheres. Nowhere in this scripture does it say to "fight back" or "wage war" with culture. With the election coming up, what are some issues that you anticipate being in the public eye that could entice Christians to respond this way? Spend some time naming these political hot topics and discussing what it would look like to be loving and life-giving in the way Christians could respond to each one.

### **Bringing It Home**

1. What type of 'rich' do you value most? What type of 'rich' do you wish you'd value most? Discuss the gap between what you do value most and what you'd wish to value most. Consider what it would take to get closer what you know is best.
2. What are some ways that you are conforming (giving in) to the culture around you? This might look like compromising what you know living like a Christian should look like or even just not prioritizing your relationship with Jesus over other areas of your life.
3. How are you going to determine to be loving and life-giving in your interactions with others, on social media and in conversations – especially with those that you may not agree with? Spend some time praying for one another and committing to hold each other accountable as you all seek to shine bright to others for Christ.