## WOW: Word Of the Week

### Tepid

**July 1, 2026**

New word? Lukewarm!

Through my 60 years of ministry, I have heard it a few times. "I have been a lukewarm Christian." Often true, not often said. Uncomfortable truth. Not many down at the church house are going to say it out loud. Yet the consciences of those same many want to know, "Am I lukewarm?"

Half in, half out. The little boy fell out of bed. He sleepily stumbled into the living room where his mother was still awake. He was seeking comfort. She asked him, "How did you fall out of bed." His response was telling. "I think I stayed too close to where I got in." Why do Christians end up lukewarm, tepid? They stay too close to where they got in.

Kudos to Frankie V. for germ thoughts included in this week's WOW.

What a world we live in! We consume like crazy – Christian music, podcasts, videos, devotionals, YouTube channels, shorts and clips and reels. Bible apps keep track of our reading streaks. All of that, plus mostly regular attendance, plus… All of these things; yet many are lukewarm – the kind of Christians Jesus describes at Laodicea. So easy, not costly. So easy to be a Christian in our little part of the world. Or is it? Are you tepid? How do you know?

The Laodicean church was not struggling with unbelievers among them, false teaching, apostasy. They were comfortable in their Christianity—too comfortable. Viola describes them, "They had enough religion to feel good about themselves and enough worldly success to not really need God." God would reject them. Spit them out.

Many authors have described Laodicea. You likely know the basics. Wealthy, a banking center. Famous for its eye salve and its glossy black wool. When an earthquake leveled the city, the residents rebuilt the city themselves. They did not need anyone's help. Even if you're not OK, I most certainly am OK.

We live in a world where we can create the perfect image – Christian interests, family, friends, post Bible verses, like and share. Attend church weekly wherever suits you best. We live in a disconnected world. No one will be the wiser. No one will see our internal disconnectedness. No one will know our needs as long as we reflect the expectations of the generally Christian culture around us. No radical discipleship for us, no countercultural waves, no conflicts, no calling on the carpet. Just talk the talk—at least when you are around other Christians, act decent, be nice.

Laodicea. Did they know they were tepid, in trouble? I think not – at least not until they got the letter! "*You say you are rich and need nothing, but you don't know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."* They had constructed an image of themselves that they considered true. But it was wrong!

There's a big difference in knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus. (My Knowing Jesus video study and series was one more attempt to get to the heart of our dilemma.) There's a big difference in being a church member and being a committed disciple of Jesus. Knowing about someone and knowing that person are two different things. Knowing about the King and living for the king loyal to his kingship are two different things.

Tepid. Don't be!