

## 2 John: “Truth in Love Once More”

John finished his first letter with the short, terse, puzzling command: “keep yourselves from idols.”

We quickly discovered that Idols are more than just carved statues of wood, stone or medal... an idol is anything that takes our complete attention and focus off of Jesus.

- \* We can make an idol of ourselves... overindulgence in food or drink, by too much concern about how we look or what we wear
- \* The pursuit of wealth and material things can squeeze Jesus out of being first in all things
- \* This speaks against worshipping dear friends, or even our children...
- \* This speaks against worshipping some hobby or pursuit

### **ME AND FANTASY FOOTBALL**

Colossians 1:18 that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

**Preeminence**... Above and before... **first place in our lives!**

**Jesus has earned the right to rule! To be first... preeminent in EVERYTHING!**

For John, Jesus is the real thing, and anything and everything else, if substitute for Jesus, is an idol. He loves you soooo much and is jealous for your worship... yes, it wants it all... undivided and complete.

The word “**KEEP**” means “**TO GUARD AGAINST.**” Idolatry is something we must guard against in our lives on daily basis.

**God's glory and holiness were with the ARK. The Shekinah and Kabod "The glory of God" His presence weight. The idol's can not stand up to God's mighty presence!**

**Don't focus on removing the idols focus on the Glory of God and your precious relationship with Him. As His presence fills your life the idols will fall!**

→ **LAST WORDS STICK, "KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS," Pray**

**Background to 2 & 3 John were written** as personal correspondence rather than as **doctrinal statements or historical records**, yet they are still full of doctrinal **"TRUTH IN LOVE"**

We do learn that the old adage is indeed true: **WHEREVER THERE ARE PEOPLE, THERE ARE PROBLEMS**. So it is that in 2 and 3 John, **John deals with people problems in the early church**. In 2 John, He deals with them **generally**; in 3 John, he deals with them **specifically**. There are times when we must speak the truth **generally** and let the Holy Spirit make application **specifically**. But there are also times when, like John, we must speak the truth to people individually and personally. The lessons seen in John's last two epistles have great application to us as Calvary Chapel Oceanside, as families, and as individuals.

**John's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter...** **1** The Elder, To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, **2** because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: **3** Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. **4** I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. **5** And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. **6** This is love,

that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. **7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. **8** Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. **9** Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; **11** for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. **12** Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. **13** The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

**1** The Elder, To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, **Again, John sure loves the “Truth” He used the word *truth* some 37 times in his New Testament writings.** The truth here is ultimately the truth of the gospel, which means the truth about Jesus and all it entails. Christians who possess God’s truth are equipped to fend off all false doctrines, as John will make clear in this letter.

John calls himself “the elder,” **he was most likely close to 100 years old.** He uses the term **presbyter** or **elder**, not as the name of an office, but as he designated his advanced age.) and the church to whom he writes he calls “*the elect lady and her children.*” As one commentator continues... “So strange is this opening that some have suggested John was actually writing to a woman, a

matron, and her children. But it is better to interpret “*elect lady*” as a reference to a particular local church, probably somewhere in Asia Minor. In his first letter John often spoke of his readers “*as children.*” Such symbolic usage is probably his strategy here. If the word translated “lady” refers to an individual, then it would be stretching credibility to suppose that she had a sister by the same name who is mentioned in verse 13 as well: “The children of your elect sister greet you.” It is highly unlikely that this is a reference to literal children of a literal sister. Personification is John’s way of writing about the church and her members.”

**THE ELECT LADY...** John commends the elect lady (Church) in verses 1–4, commands her in verses 5–6, cautions her in verses 7–11, and, lastly, comforts her in verses 12, 13.

2 because of the truth which abides in us and **will be with us forever.**


The truth does not change. The truth will be true **forever**, and we will have the truth forever in eternity. Many people today think that the truth changes from age to age and from generation to generation, but the Bible knows that the truth **will be with us forever.**

3 Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

“**GRACE**” describes all that God has done for us in Christ that we did not deserve.

“**MERCY**” is God not giving us all we do deserve!

“**PEACE**” is the resulting state we have with God and with others that results from the application of God’s grace and mercy to our lives.

 Meyer said, "What deep, sweet rhythm of meaning there is in the first 3 verses of this letter! One reads them over and over again. Oh, that the grace, mercy, and peace, may be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and in love."

**TRUTH IN LOVE... Truth and love...** In Ephesians 4:15 Paul says we are to speak the truth in love—Although John talks about **LOVE** more than any other writer in Scripture, he also emphasizes **TRUTH** more than any other writer, again using it some **37** times.

**Truth without love makes a person harsh. But love without truth makes a person dangerous because he will allow cancers to grow and problems to take root in his life, in his family, on the job, or in the church.**


"Truth is an attribute of God's character expressed in his Word and his gospel, and "love" is the divine motivation for all God does for those who are his children.

Basically, what John is saying to us in this letter is: **know the truth... walk in the truth... and abide in the truth.** Do it all in "LOVE"

4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.

**THE OTHER NIGHT IN CALVARY 201 WE AS PASTORS WERE ASKED WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST JOY RIGHT NOW AS YOU SERVE? AS JOHN SAYS HERE "I REJOICED GREATLY THAT I HAVE FOUND *SOME* OF YOUR CHILDREN WALKING IN TRUTH". Not just knowing the truth but walking in the truth! Certainly NOT THE ONLY JOY I HAVE BUT THIS IS A BIGEE.**

5 And now I plead with you, **Strong word... Keep that which matters the most as your priority...** And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.

 Meyer said, "Perhaps you fail to distinguish between love and the emotion of love. They are not the same. We may love without being directly conscious of love, or being able to estimate its strength and passion. Here is the solution to many of our questionings: They love who obey."

6 This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. Love and obedience always go together in the Christian life. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

*John's point is that our behavior should balance out with what God says our behavior should be.* As Riken so quippingly said, “Only when we know what we believe and why we believe it will we be in a position to behave it!”

**IN HIS LETTER TO EPHEBUS PAUL TAKES 3 CHAPTERS SHOWING US ALL CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US. THEN HE IMPLORES US TO “WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF OUR CALLING.”** Again In **Philippians 1:27 Paul wrote**, “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

Notice Paul's use of the word “worthy” in both places. The meaning is, “*Let your behavior balance out with what the gospel says your behavior should be.*” Paul and John use the same concept of balance to express how our conduct should be commensurate with the gospel.

Again verse 6, This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Gnostics again were called out for their demonic teaching. False teaching is a very serious crime against Christianity.

**One man said** “A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes.” John calls them “**deceivers**,” a descriptive term that identifies their activity. **These deceivers are deniers!** They deny the incarnation (Jesus is God in the flesh) They have gone out into the world carrying their false doctrine with them. **They carry the spirit of antichrist..** The word “*antichrist*” means

“*against Christ*” or “*in the place of Christ.*” John does not mean that any one of these false teachers is the personal Antichrist spoken of in Revelation as the final world ruler who opposes Christ just before his second coming. Rather, any and all false teachers partake of the character of the final antichrist.

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. *Not just how we start but how we finish... so many start well. Grieves John and no doubt God when we walk away from what is true.* Look to yourselves... **The present imperative stresses the need for us to be on constant guard.** Complacency may lead us to a false sense of security, thinking we are beyond the seductive nature of false teachers and their teaching.

**AND THEN HE ISSUES A WORD OF CAUTION... verse 9**

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.

Several translations say “**whoever goes on ahead**” this refers to advancing beyond the clear teaching of the gospel into the territory of false doctrine. The false teachers John is referring to considered themselves *progressives*, **advanced thinkers**. Progress in the Christian life is commendable. Growth in spiritual maturity is the order of the day. However, progressive thinking beyond gospel truth leads to untruth and is condemned for the error that it is. “If it’s new it’s probably not true”



Guzik says, “There is nothing noble, sincere, courageous, or admirable in a *false* Jesus. To deny the Biblical Jesus is *always* to reject the Father and the Son both. John here draws a critical line of truth, over which it is heresy to *transgress.*”

Marshall “To say *no* to God's way of revealing himself is to say *no* to God himself, for he will not let himself be known by men except on his own terms.”

The identify of Jesus is crucial! This cuts straight to the heart of Christianity, and John wastes

no time exposing it as false doctrine.

**transgresses** A very crucial addition to what John is saying is the fact that any time doctrine changed to allow for “carnality” or immoral behavior, **your doctrine is not from God.**

Examples... Homosexuality, abortion, drunkenness, marriage in any definition other than God's (between one man and one woman. Now you have to say between one genetic man and one genetic woman). The Bible calls this (the flesh) The flesh is never good or godly!

→ Reverend Bromleigh McCleneghan promotes in her new book, 'Good Christian Sex.' Single Christians Can Have Sex as Long as It's 'Mutually Pleasurable and Affirming,'

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Hughes, “As John records Jesus saying in his Gospel (14:6), Jesus is the only way to God, and “No one comes to the Father except through me.” There is no place here or anywhere in the New Testament for universalism (all will be saved) or inclusivism (an implicit faith response to general revelation apart from knowledge of Jesus can bring about salvation). All of us know someone, whether at school, work, or another venue, who believes that in the end everyone is going to Heaven. Likewise, all of us know someone who believes that people can experience salvation without knowledge of Jesus Christ. Such beliefs are part and parcel of the current cultural atmosphere. The problem is, such beliefs are directly contradicted by Scripture.”

**Yes, Cultural Christianity as opposed to Biblical Christianity is not just a moral departure but a doctrinal one as well.**

**ONE THE OTHER HAND VERSE 9 CONTINUES.** “He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone



comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him. **John means “greet” in a much more involved context than our own. In that culture, it meant to show hospitality and give aid.**

 One scholar notes, “Christian ethics called for Christians to show hospitality to traveling teachers and missionaries when they came to town. But what if the traveling missionary or teacher was a false teacher? John’s second letter shows this had become a problem in the early church.”

**Tough words from John (apostle of love) why? because truth is the ultimate love.** This may also be translated do not receive him into the house. John may be referring most specifically to not allowing these heretical teachers to come into **the house** where Christians met together.

**Maybe we should reconsider allowing the Cults that knock at our door in.** Some may think that to refuse to invite visiting false teachers into your home ranges from, at the very least, inhospitable to, at the most, downright rude. But if you will think about it for a moment, you can see the unwisdom of inviting them into your home. If you do so, when the false teacher knocks on your neighbor’s door down the street, he can say, “Well, your neighbor, Mike, just a few doors down, let me in, and we had a wonderful talk!” My disobedience could lead to someone else’s spiritual destruction.

Clarke "The words mean, according to the eastern use of them, 'Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother.' "

11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. **LISTEN TO THESE**

**WISE WORDS FROM ONE MAN OF GOD, "WE ARE DEFINED BY WHAT WE REJECT AS MUCH AS BY WHAT WE ACCEPT. IN THIS, SOME ARE SO OPEN MINDED THAT THEY ARE EMPTY HEADED. IT IS WISE TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON MANY THINGS; BUT ONE WOULD NEVER KEEP AN OPEN MIND ABOUT WHICH**

**POISONS A PERSON MIGHT TRY. YOU MAY SAY YES TO ALL THE RIGHT THINGS; BUT ONE MUST ALSO SAY NO TO WHAT IS FALSE AND EVIL. WE NEED TO BECOME GOOD AT REJECTING WHAT SHOULD BE REJECTED.”**

Finally, after commending, commanding, and cautioning, John comforts.

12 Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; **Written communication is sometimes prone to being misunderstood. That’s why I hate emails and texting... oh how I prefer face to face interaction.**

**Distance sometimes makes written communication necessary**  
**INK CANNOT PUT AN ARM AROUND SOMEONE’S SHOULDER AND CONSOLE, ENCOURAGE OR REBUKE.** So John says ending

verse 12... I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. 13 The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

“Stay away from heretics,” he writes, “Walk in truth. And don’t forget love.”

**Love and truth our watchwords**... Love and truth, like the right and left ventricle of the heart, function as the circulatory system of the church. When the two are functioning freely, the body of Christ is healthy.

*The THINGS that matter in life are not things at all ...*

THE GREATEST JOY OF HEAVEN WILL BE GOD’S PRESENCE  
**The greatest agony of hell will be God’s absence**

The final message of Ecclesiastes is not that **nothing matters** but that “everything matters”. **What we did, HOW WE DID IT, and why we did it** will all have eternal significance.

*So Fear God... Keep His Commandments...*