



First Baptist Church Selmer

HOPE IN THE WORD • WALKING IN TRUTH & LOVE • 2 JOHN 1-11 • 7/20/2025

MAIN POINT

Authentic salvation exhorts believers to walk in the truth, love one another, and guard against false teaching.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What might be your response to someone who said, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and loving"?

What might be your response to someone who said, "It doesn't matter how you live as long as you believe in God"?

These two statements are clearly opposites, yet each can be attributed to some people's understanding of the Christian life. Nevertheless, both are wrong. The reason is that the Word of God binds both truth and love together. They are friends, not enemies. Nowhere will you see this more clearly than in 2 John. John's major purpose is to demonstrate how love and truth are designed to support and complement one another and give Christians practical wisdom in living out this truth.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 JOHN 1-3.

1 "The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, 2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love." (ESV)

In verses 1-3, notice how many times “truth” and “love” are mentioned together. How do we go about loving someone “in the truth” (v. 1)?

What does it mean to love them “because of the truth” (v. 2)?

Do you find it easier to love only Christians who agree with you? Why or why not?

John closes his greeting with the repetition of the words “truth and love.” The placement of these words here allows John to emphasize their importance and prepares the readers for the main theme of the epistle. To maintain a healthy and growing community, the church must exhibit a fidelity to the truth that knows no compromise, and they must love one another in a way that knows no boundaries. Yes, Christians are called to genuinely love their enemies. But grace, mercy, and peace flourish in an environment where truth and love unite, not where truth is compromised in an expression of “love”. It is truth that unites the Christian community when it faces falsehood. Truth is evident among Christians when they demonstrate their unity in showing love toward one another.

"Truth in the biblical sense is essential not optional, eternal not relative, consistent not changing, and permanent not perspectival... Indeed, we must have a consuming passion for this truth, truth that is bathed in love." (*Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary*)

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 JOHN 4-6.

4 "I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. 5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it." (ESV)

What does it look like to “walk in the truth” (v. 4)? What spiritual disciplines do you currently practice that help you do this? Which do you need to work on?

According to this passage, what is the relationship between walking in the truth and loving one another in the church?

Evangelist and preacher Vance Havner (1901-1986) once stated, "What we live is what we really believe. Everything else is just so much religious talk!"

Walking in the truth (obedience) and love for one another go hand in hand. The absence of one will ensure the absence of the other. Christians must love one another. This love is the basis of Christian living, to which all believers constantly need to recall. For John, it meant practical, costly caring for the needy, including readiness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others, while simultaneously requiring real affection for one's fellow believers.

Believers are commanded by God to love, but equally love God's commands. The truth of God's Word is not merely something we believe, but something we live.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 JOHN 7-11.

7 "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works." (ESV)

In verses 7-11, the unity of truth and love is applied to our relationships with unbelievers. By denying that Jesus had come in the flesh (v. 7), what biblical truths were the false teachers rejecting?

What false teaching have you been exposed to in your life? What relationship did those experiences have with your local congregation?

In today's world, there is ample opportunity for false teaching to infiltrate any member of any congregation. But false teachers do not need television, radio, or the internet to make an impact on any given local church. The teaching itself can be so enticing that it can quickly spread like a virus. Only a congregation that knows the truth and how it applies can reject false teaching consistently and firmly.

How can the church be vigilant in guarding against false doctrines infiltrating the body of believers?

What responsibility do you have individually to guard yourself against these false doctrines?

John was motivated by the prospect of obtaining a future reward for faithful service (v. 8). In what sense does the prospect of receiving a reward from Jesus Christ motivate you to walk in truth and love?

John was confronted with the spiritual, mystical theology of Gnosticism in his ministry. John knew the epitome of truth centered on the doctrine of Jesus Christ. If you are wrong on Jesus, you are wrong everywhere. John issued a very strict warning to believers that all knowledge must center around the correct view of Jesus Himself. All roads to eternity must go through Jesus (John 14:6).

Has there ever been a time in your life when you struggled to believe that trusting in Jesus alone was enough to save you?

How does John say we must treat those who bring false teaching to the church?

Have you ever experienced a false teaching in a church? If so, share with your group.

It is vital to the Gospel that believers remain vigilant in the keeping of sound doctrine of Jesus Christ. Although there is an appropriate way to contradict false teaching, the slightest encouragement to these teachers who spread the cancer of false teaching is detrimental to the church as a whole. The issue of truth is crucial. It must be preserved. When love is present, lies are not welcome. To act in any other manner would be to invite spiritual death.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Would you identify yourself as someone whose truth needs to be balanced by love or whose love needs to be balanced by truth? Explain.

What can you do to gain a better balance?

Through this study, have you become aware of any false teaching you might be entertaining? What should you do in response?

PRAYER

Pray that your life would reveal an understanding of both truth and love.

COMMENTARY

| 2 JOHN 1-11

1–3. John described himself as an “elder.” The term may refer either to an official title (see 1 Pet. 5:1), or it may describe John affectionately as an old man.

John designated his recipients as “the chosen lady and her children.” Some have felt that her name was “Kyria” and others have chosen “Electa.” If her name were “Electa,” we would have to say that she also had a sister of the same name. If the recipient were an individual, she would likely be anonymous. The phrase is more likely a reference to some local church over which the elder had authority. The “children” were members of that church. John’s statement of love and the command to love would be more suitable for a church than for a person. The command not to host false teachers is also more suitable for a local church than for a single home.

The feature that united John with his readers was their common love for the truth (vv. 1b–2). Grace indicated God’s provision of salvation, and God’s gift of mercy demonstrated the depth of human need of it. Peace is a description of the character of salvation.

4–6. John had met some of the children of the lady, perhaps members of the church, in his travel. Their conduct had impressed him. The meeting led to a single request: Love one another. That request led John to consider the link between love and obedience. If we love God, we will obey Him. Our love for Him expresses itself in our obedience.

7–11. John warned against deceivers who led others astray. The doctrine they stressed involved a denial of the incarnation. Christians affirmed the genuine humanity of Jesus when they said, “Christ has come in the flesh.” Jesus did not become Christ at the baptism or cease to be Christ before His death. He was Christ come in the flesh.

John warned his readers against losing their reward for faithful service by falling into doctrinal error (v. 8). He affirmed that one who erred at this important point did not have God.

John included an additional warning in verses 10–11. He warned against providing any sort of official welcome for those who erred in their doctrine of Christ. John was not promoting intolerance, nor was he violating his earlier appeal to “love one another.” He was warning against extending any form of support for those who erred at the point of

the genuine humanity of Christ. We should not apply John's words to cause us to separate from those whose opinions we happen to dislike.