



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: 2 John 1-13

1 The elder: To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth—and not only I, but also all who know the truth— 2 because of the truth that remains 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 Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, in keeping with a command we have received from the Father. 5 So now I ask you, dear lady—not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. 6 This is love: that we walk according to his commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you walk in it.

7 Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves so that you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward. 9 Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one 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 home, and do not greet him; 11 for the one who greets him shares in his evil works.

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so that our joy may be complete. 13 The children of your elect sister send you greetings.

1. A letter to a church – the “lady and her children”

- “...the letter is addressed “to the lady chosen by God and to her children” which is a metaphorical way of addressing a local church and its members. This [interpretation] is the choice of most

modern interpreters...” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 224

2. Living in Truth and Love – vv. 3-6

- 3 *Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*
- 4 *I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, in keeping with a command we have received from the Father. 5 So now I ask you, dear lady—not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. 6 This is love: that we walk according to his commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you walk in it.*

a. Knowing the truth

a. Truth refers to Christ in whom we remain

- “Verse 2 removes all doubt that the elder here refers to Christ and the revelation he brings, for the truth in view remains, or abides, “in us” and will be “with us” forever.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, pp. 256-7
- “...truth is not found in mere claims, regardless of who makes them, but only as revealed in the incarnate Son of God, who is the Truth.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 267
- “On the surface, the text appears to indicate that the truth of the message has been internalized by believers so that it “lives in” them and this is what creates the community of love. The text may also be alluding to Christ, as the embodiment of truth (cf. John 14:6), who lives in believers and who will be with them “forever.” In this case, the community of love is created not simply by believers internalizing the truth of the gospel, but also by the indwelling of Christ, who is the embodiment of the gospel message, in each one of them.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 225

b. Truth refers to the real condition and need of people

- “It is only by recognizing the truth that all are sinners, but that all can receive God’s love, mercy, and grace in Christ, that we can genuinely love ourselves and others while being fully informed about our own poor capacity for love and about the worth of others.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 258

b. Walking in truth and love – v. 6

- 6 *This is love: that we walk according to his commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you walk in it.*
- “The antecedent of the feminine date pronoun “it” in the final clause of the verse is grammatically ambiguous. It agrees with any one of the three feminine nouns in the immediate context: command, love, or truth. Wendland sees this as intentional ambiguity here that he describes as “semantic density,” encompassing all three ideas to underscore their inseparability from one another.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 263
- “Another approach to the interpretation of “in it” is to regard *en aute* in v. 6 as an example of semantic density; that is, at this point the author deliberately intends that the reader understands that the antecedents of *aute* (it) are truth, commandment, and love. To walk in “it,” then, would be to walk in truth and love.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 229
- ““Walking in the truth” is a distinctively Johannine metaphor; it means to live in a way consistent with the revelation Jesus Christ has brought...Walking in the truth involves both faith in Christ as God’s Son and love for others.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 261
- “To walk in truth includes accepting the truth of the Christian message and obeying it. Here it refers specifically to loving one another (vv. 5-6) and confessing Jesus Christ as come in the flesh (v. 7; cp. 1 Jn 4:3).” *The Apologetics Study Bible*, p.1873

c. Truth and love go together

- “The author’s love was consistent with the truth of the Christian message that he and his readers had received. This emphasis on truth shows that authentic Christian love involves more than sentimentality.” *The Apologetics Study Bible*, p.1873
- “The linking of “truth” and “love” is of great importance. Because John’s readers are in the truth—i.e., they know Jesus as the Christ, the Father’s Son—they are also the recipients of God’s love as it is known and manifested in the community of a faith. And the love received by the community comes from all who know the truth. The author is speaking in clear contrast to the heretics. They do not have the

truth, nor do they know what it means to be in the community of love". Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament

- "Genuine love is defined in John's writings as the love that God has extended to fallen human beings through the cross of Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10, 19) so that we might not perish in eternity but have eternal life with God and each other. ... That vicarious atonement happened on the cross of Jesus Christ, the God-man, and is God's greatest expression of love for us (1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:8)." Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 258
- "Perhaps the genius of John's writings is that he grounds truth, faith, commands, and love all in the revelation of God that Jesus Christ brought, and he redefines each in terms of the others such that one cannot have genuine faith without truth, and one cannot have truth apart from love, and one cannot love without living God's commands." Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 266

d. Grace, mercy and peace are with us in truth and love – V. 3

- "It is in and through such "truth and love" that the elder assures us that grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ will be with us always." Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 258

3. Warning about deceivers – vv. 7-11

a. Deceivers, antichrists – those who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh

- *7 Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.*
- "The confession that Jesus Christ "has come in flesh" does not simply acknowledge that Jesus was a fully human historical person... but accepts the redeeming significance of his incarnate life, death, and resurrection on behalf of the human race." Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 265
- "What the secessionists denied, when stated fully, was that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, whose death was an atoning sacrifice. The author of 1 John could signal this whole complex of ideas by referring to just one or another aspect of it (cf. 1 John 2:22; 4:2, 3, 15; 5:1, 5, 6), and it is probably best to read the present verse in the same way." Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 230

b. Watch out for the deceivers – v. 8

- *8 Watch yourselves so that you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward.*

c. The deceivers "go beyond" (addition) and "do not remain (abide) in" (subtraction) the teaching of Christ – v. 9

- *9 Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son.*
- "The word rendered here as goes beyond ... is translated variously as "runs ahead" (NIV), "wander away from" (NLT), "goes too far" (NASB), "goes on ahead" (ESV), "goes beyond" (NJB) – all capturing the sense here in contrast to *remaining* in the teaching of Christ, a major theme in John's writings. Yarbrough ... translates the sense "everyone who innovates" in their beliefs." Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 270

a. "Teaching of Christ" (subj. or obj genitive?) – 'Christ's own teaching' or 'teaching about Christ'?

- "The expression ... could be either a subjective genitive, meaning *Christ's teaching*, or an objective genitive, meaning *teaching about Christ*. The context is our best approach to resolve this dilemma. 2 Jn. 7-10 makes it clear that teaching is the chief 'bone of contention'. V. 7 specifically points to the secessionists' refusal to confess the Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. They and the Elder disagree about the incarnation, or a *teaching about Jesus*. It is the incarnational revelation of Jesus that makes abiding in God possible (1 Jn. 2:22-25). If one does not have a clear grasp of who Jesus is, then one also has a warped view of God. Therefore [in this context *it means the*] *teaching about Christ*." [J. E. McDermond, *1, 2, 3 John*, p.]

b. Going beyond and not remaining removes oneself from relationship with God – "does not have God"

- "Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it offers what I call a 'Bible plus' doctrine & a 'Jesus plus' theology [they add something]. They leave the basic, biblical truths about Jesus [Subtraction] & claim something new & something better [Addition]... All deceivers, all false teachers, practice a very similar '*spiritual mathematical strategy*':" **Addition:** They add an extra-biblical [teaching, idea,] source of authority... **Subtraction:** They subtract from the person & work of Jesus Christ, Son of God...his deity & redemption ..."[Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John*, p. 139]

- “To move in one’s thinking beyond the teaching of Christ is to remove oneself from relationship with God (to not have God), for the teaching that originated with Jesus, that which was illuminated by the Holy Spirit and preserved by the apostles, came from God himself (John 7:16, 17) Here [the elder] warns that such beliefs lie outside the bounds of a relationship with God (cf. 1 John 1:3).” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, pp. 270-1

c. Examples of “going beyond” and not remaining in the teaching of Christ

- “Christians ...need to be wary of those religions who honor Jesus in some way, such as Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Christian Scientists, but who have gone beyond the teachings of Christ by supplementing or revising the NT with religious ideas by much later thinkers such as Joseph Smith, Charles Tze Russel, and Mary Baker Eddy, respectively. These groups may well represent a modern instance of what the elder was arguing against in his time, for they emerged in the nineteenth century by deviating from orthodox Christian doctrine.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, pp. 274-5
- “Mormonism is neither monotheistic nor, technically, trinitarian.... Mormonism teaches that Father, Son, and Spirit are all God, but it denies the historic Christian view on the Trinity. ...Mormonism is not trinitarian but tritheist. ... In Mormonism [people] are not saved by the atoning work of Christ but by obedience to Mormon principles. ...Because of these departures from standard Christian teachings, Mormonism falls outside orthodox Christianity.” *The Apologetics Study Bible*, p.39
- “Jehovah’s Witnesses (JWs) use a doctored version of the Bible called the New World Translation (NWT). The JW leaders who produced the NWT were not biblical scholars, and it shows. The most obvious difference between the NWT and other Bibles is its use of “Jehovah” in the NT. JWs claim that the NT originally used the Hebrew name YHWH (translated “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”) and that apostate scribes put “Lord” (Kg. *kurios*) in its place. There is no historical or manuscript evidence for this claim....JWs teach that the Father alone is Jehovah, the almighty God; that the Son, Jesus Christ, is “a god” inferior to the Father; and that the “holy spirit” is an impersonal force emanating from God.” *The Apologetics Study Bible*, p.1562
- “By redefining biblical terms, Christian Science denies virtually every cardinal doctrine of Christianity. In no meaningful way can Christian Science be considered compatible with the Bible.” *The Apologetics Study Bible*, p.1871
- “One of the clearer issues today is the prevalent assumption that all monotheistic religions must be worshiping the same God by different names.... And so we should be wary of too quick an application of monotheism that would, without nuance, equate the God of the Muslims and/or the God of the Jews with the Father of Jesus Christ.” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 274
- “As in the days of the elder, so too today, there are those who think that the teaching of the Lord Jesus is outdated and they need to move “ahead.” Gospel truth is never out of date and needs to be applied afresh to every succeeding generation.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 237

d. Remaining in the teaching of Christ

- “It is not the going forward that is at fault so much as *the failure to remain*...It is the remaining that [John] intends to highlight... 2 John’s ideal [is] of ‘remaining in the teaching’... [It is] the teaching ‘of Christ’... It is unlikely that this means the teaching *given* by Christ... [Rather,] it is *the teaching about (the) Christ* that he wishes to safeguard.” [Judith Lieu, *I, II & III John*, p. 262]

a. Remaining in ‘his words’ – John 15:7 “If you remain in me and my words remain in you...”

- The words that abide in us are simply the thoughts that flow through our minds. They can be good or bad. We may choose them intentionally or allow them to dwell haphazardly. But one truth is certain: we are formed by the words that abide [remain] in us. So Jesus is ... calling us ...to seek to have *his* words be the ones abiding in our minds.” John Ortberg, *Eternity is Now in Session*, p. 166
- Col 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...”

b. Adding could be the first step to not remaining (subtracting)

e. Do not receive them – v. 10

- **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.*

a. Do not receive them into your house

- “The context of *if anyone comes* makes clear that this refers to traveling teachers or preachers working against true Christian teaching. *do not receive him into your house*. Such a welcome would give the appearance of endorsing the false teaching (early churches were house churches). This is not a prohibition about showing the hospitality to sinners for which Jesus himself was well known (and criticized; see [9:10–13](#); [11:19](#)); Paul also warned against overzealous separation from non-Christians ([1 Cor. 5:9–10](#)). It is rather *false Christians* that require caution and perhaps rejection. The significance of John’s call to reject the false teacher was heightened in a society that considered hospitality a great virtue.” ESV Study Bible p. 2441

- “The provision of hospitality for itinerant Christians was very important in the early days of the church... Those who welcomed and provided hospitality to travelers were providing them with patronage so that they would have the standing of a protégé or guest in the community and so enjoy the protection afforded by the local laws.
- “Second, it could be taken to mean receiving an itinerant preacher in the assembly of a house church... the elder could well be advising the members of the house church not to receive heretical teachers into the assembly of the church, implying that they not be given opportunity to propagate their beliefs. These two alternatives are not mutually exclusive, for in the early days the church met in someone’s home.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 234
- “The false teacher was not to be given any standing in the community, making it hard for them to gain a hearing before the church (cf. Jude 3-4, 12-19).” Karen H. Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 272

b. Do not greet them

- “Perhaps the elder’s counsel to his readers not to greet the secessionists is to be understood in the light of the fact that Christian greetings generally carried a recognition of the Christian standing of those being greeted, a standing the elder believed the secessionists did not have any longer.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 234
- “Greetings means to extend approval, assistance, and full fellowship.” ESV Study Bible p. 2442

c. The one who greets them takes part in their evil works

- “The elder knew that it was not possible for his readers to “greet” the secessionists without that greeting implying a recognition of the secessionists’ Christian standing, and thus identifying themselves with the secessionists’ “wicked work.” The “wicked work,” of course, was propagating aberrant teaching, and if his readers greeted these people or took them into their houses, they would be associating themselves with this work.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 235

d. Should we give hospitality to or welcome unbelievers?

- “All this does not mean that believers should not provide hospitality for strangers (cf. Heb. 13:2) or that they should separate themselves from unbelievers (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-10); it is the false teachers that John had in mind.” ESV Study Bible

4. Final greetings – vv. 12-13

a. Desiring to see them face to face – v. 12

- “By speaking to them face to face, the elder hopes to ensure that they continue walking in the truth, and that will make the great joy he has already (v.4) complete.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p. 237

b. Conveying the greetings of the church of which he himself is a member – v. 13