

2 John Devotionals

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE

2 John 1:3.

Alexander Maclaren

'Grace be with you. mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.' — 2 John 1:3.

WE have here a very unusual form of the Apostolic salutation. 'Grace, mercy, and peace' are put together in this fashion only in Paul's two Epistles to Timothy, and in this the present instance; and all reference to the Holy Spirit as an agent in the benediction is, as there, omitted. The three main words, 'Grace, mercy, and peace,' stand related to each other in a very interesting manner. If you will think for a moment you will see, I presume, that the Apostle starts, as it were, from the fountain-head, and slowly traces the course of the blessing down to its lodgment in the heart of man. There is the fountain, and the stream, and, if I may so say; the great still lake in the soul, into which its waters flow, and which the flowing waters make. There is the sun, and the beam, and the brightness grows deep in the heart of man. Grace, referring solely to the Divine attitude and thought: mercy, the manifestation of grace in act, referring to the workings of that great Godhead in its relation to humanity: and peace, which is the issue in the soul of the fluttering down upon it of the mercy which is the activity of the grace. So these three come down, as it were, a great, solemn, marble staircase from the heights of the Divine mind, one step at a time, down to the level of earth; and the blessings which are shed along the earth. Such is the order. All begins with grace; and the end and purpose of grace, when it flashes into deed, and becomes mercy, is to fill my soul with quiet repose, and shed across all the turbulent sea of human love a great calm, a beam of sunshine that gilds, and miraculously stills while it gilds, the waves.

If that be, then, the account of the relation of these three to one another, let me just dwell for a moment upon their respective characteristics, that we may get more fully the large significance and wide scope of this blessing. Let us begin at what may be regarded either as the highest point from which all the stream descends, or as the foundation upon which all the structure rests 'Grace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.' These two, blended and yet separate, to either of whom a Christian man has a distinct relation, these two are the sources, equally, of the whole of the grace

The Scriptural idea of grace is love that stoops, and that pardons, and that communicates. I say nothing about that last characteristic, but I would like to dwell for a moment or two upon the other phases of this great word, a key-word to the understanding of so much of Scripture.

The first thing then that strikes me in it is how it exults in that great thought that there is no reason whatsoever for God's love except God's will. The very foundation and notion of the word 'grace' is a free, undeserved, unsolicited, self-prompted, and altogether gratuitous bestowment, a love that is its own reason, as indeed the whole of the Divine acts are, just as we say of Him that He draws His being from Himself, so the whole motive for His action and the whole reason for His heart of tenderness to us lies in Himself. We have no power. We love one another because we apprehend something deserving of love, or fancy that we do. We love one another because there is something in the object on which our love falls; which, either by kindred or by character, or by visible form, draws it out. We are influenced so, and love a thing because the thing or the person is perceived by us as being worthy, for some reason or other, of the love. God loves because He cannot help it; God loves because He is God. Our love is drawn out — I was going to say pumped out — by an application of external causes.

God's love is like an artesian well, whensoever you strike, up comes, self-impelled, gushing into light because there is such a central store of it beneath everything, the bright and flashing waters. Grace is love that is not drawn out, but that bursts out, self-originated, undeserved. 'Not for your sakes, be it known unto you, O house of Israel, but for Mine own name's sake, do I this.' The grace of God is above that, comes spontaneously, driven by its own fulness, and welling up unasked, unprompted, undeserved, and therefore never to be turned away by our evil, never to be wearied by our indifference, never to be brushed aside by our negligence, never to be provoked by our transgression, the fixed, eternal, unalterable centre of the Divine nature. His love is grace.

And then, in like manner, let me remind you that there lies in this great word, which in itself is a gospel, the preaching that God's love, though it be not turned away by, is made tender by our sin. Grace is love extended to a person that might reasonably expect, because he deserves, something very different; and when there is laid, as the foundation of everything, the grace of our Father and of the Son of the Father; it is but packing into one word that great truth which we all of us, saints and sinners, need — a sign that God's love is love that deals with our transgressions and shortcomings, flows forth perfectly conscious of them, and manifests itself in taking them away, both in their guilt, punishment, and peril. 'The grace of our Father' is a love to which sin-convinced consciences may certainly appeal; a love to which all sin-tyrannised souls may turn for emancipation and deliverance. Then, if we turn for a moment from that deep fountain, 'Love's ever-springing well,' as one of our old hymns has it, to the stream, we get other blessed

thoughts. The love, the grace, breaks into mercy. The fountain gathers itself into a river, the infinite, Divine love concentrates itself in act, and that act is described by this one word, mercy. As grace is love which forgives, so mercy is love which pities and helps. Mercy regards men, its object, as full of sorrows and miseries, and so robes itself in garb of compassion, and takes wine and oil into its hands to pour into the wound, and lays often a healing hand, very carefully and very gently, upon the creature, lest, like a clumsy surgeon, it should pain instead of heal, and hurt where it desires to console. God's grace softens itself into mercy, and all His dealings with us men must be on the footing that we are not only sinful, but that we are weak and wretched, and so fit subjects for a compassion which is the strangest paradox of a perfect and divine heart.

The mercy of God is the outcome of His grace. And as is the fountain and the stream, so is the great lake into which it spreads itself when it is received into a human heart. Peace comes, the all-sufficient sum-mint up of everything that God can give, and that men can need, from HIS loving-kindness, and from their needs. The world is too wide to be narrowed to any single aspect of the various discords and disharmonies which trouble men. Peace with God, peace in this anarchic kingdom within me, where conscience and will, hopes and fears, duty and passion, sorrows and joys, cares and confidence, are ever fighting one another; where we are torn asunder by conflicting aims and rival claims, and wherever any part of our nature asserting itself against another leads to intestine warfare, and troubles the poor soul. All that is harmonised and quieted down, and made concordant and co-operative to one great end, when the grace and the mercy have flowed silently into our spirits and harmonised aims and desires.

There is peace that comes from submission; tranquillity of spirit, which is the crown and reward of obedience; repose, which is the very smile upon the face of faith, and all these things are given unto us along with the grace and mercy of our God. And as the man that possesses this is at peace with God, and at peace with himself, so he may bear in his heart that singular blessing of a perfect tranquillity and quiet amidst the distractions of duty, of sorrows, of losses, and of cares. 'In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.' And he who is thus at friendship with God, and in harmony with himself, and at rest from sorrows and cares, will surely find no enemies amongst men with whom he must needs be at war, but will be a son of peace, and walk the world, meeting in them all a friend and a brother. So all discords maybe quieted; even though still we have to fight the good fight of faith, we may do, like Gideon of old, build an altar to 'Jehovah-shalom,' the God of peace.

And now one word, as to what this great text tells us are the conditions for a Christian man, of preserving, vivid and full, these great gifts, 'Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you,' or, as the Revised Version more accurately

reads, 'shall be with us in truth and love.' Truth and love are, as it were, the space within which the river flows, if I may so say, the banks of the stream. Or, to get away from the metaphor, these are set forth as being the conditions abiding in which, for our parts, we shall receive this benediction— 'In truth and in love.'

I have no time to enlarge upon the great thoughts that these two words, thus looked at, suggest; let me put it into a sentence. To 'abide in the truth' is to keep ourselves conscientiously and habitually under the influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of the Christ who is Himself the Truth. They who, keeping in Him, realising His presence, believing His word, founding their thinking about the unseen, about their relations to God, about sin and forgiveness, about righteousness and duty, and about a thousand other things, upon Christ and the revelation that He makes, these are those who shall receive 'Grace, mercy, and peace.' Keep yourselves in Christ, and Christ coming to you, brings in His hands, and is, the grace and the mercy and the peace of which my text speaks. And in love, if we want these blessings, we must keep ourselves consciously in the possession of, and in the grateful response of our hearts to, the great love, the incarnate Love, which is given in Jesus Christ.

Here is, so to speak, the line of direction which these great mercies take. The man who stands in their path, they will come to him and fill his heart; the man that steps aside, they will run past him and not touch him. You keep yourselves in the love of God, by communion, by the exercise of mind and heart and faith upon Him; and then be sure — for my text is not only a wish, but a confident affirmation — be sure that the fountain of all blessing itself, and the stream of petty benedictions which flow from it, will open themselves out in your hearts into a quiet, deep sea, on whose calm surface no tempests shall ever rave, and on whose unruffled bosom God Himself will manifest and mirror His face.

Today's Word

Devotional Commentary

[Dr. Grant Richison](#)

INTRODUCTION TO 2 JOHN

I. AUTHOR - John, one of the twelve apostles.

A. The writer identifies himself as an elder (verse 1).

B. A disputed canonical book.

C. Evidences:

1. External:

- Muratorian Canon
- Irenaeus (175)
- Clement of Alexandria (195)
- Origen (230)

2. Internal: Not strong (too little content)

II. DATE: between A.D. 90 and 95

III. OCCASION:

False teachers were introducing heresy to John's congregation in Asia Minor [Turkey today]. A predicament in offering hospitality occurred. It was customary to lodge teachers until they went to their next destination (Ro 12:13; He 13:2; 3Jn 5, 6, 7, 8) but this created a crisis because some itinerate false teachers presented false credentials to John's readers.

One of the contributions of the Roman Empire in spreading the gospel was the excellent road system that spanned the Empire from one end to another. Portions of two of those roads are still visible today.

1. The Appian Way is still in use near Rome.

2. The Egnatian Way may still be observed today in the vicinity of Kavalla (New Testament name: Neapolis), Philippi and Thessalonica, (Acts 13-21; Ro 15:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29; 16:1, 2; 1Th 3:1, 2,5; Titus 3:12, 13).

IV. SITUATION:

Introduction of incipient Gnosticism into the church. It is difficult to define clearly the exact nature of this Gnosticism.

V. STYLE: A private, personal letter, not an epistle like 1 John.

VI. ARGUMENT: Abiding in the truth is crucial to brotherly love.

VII. KEYS:

Key verse: verse 6

Key words: "love" and "truth"

Key phrase: "abide in the doctrine"

Key thought: walk in the truth or love in the truth

VIII. CHARACTER: General epistle

Emphasis on the combination of truth with love

Only book of the 5 that John wrote that contains the word "mercy"

This is the shortest book in the Bible. [3 John contains 13 verses and 2 John 12 verses] 303 words in King James

Written to a lady and thus is a personal letter

Symmetry: introduction, body and conclusion

IX. THEME: do not entertain false teachers.

X. IDENTITY OF READERS: to a "lady" and her children who offered hospitality to itinerate ministers in Ephesus.

XI. OUTLINE

Greeting, 1-3

Implementing the truth, 4-6

Occasion, 4

Exhortation to love based on truth, 5,6

Defending the truth, 7-11

Warning against false doctrine, 7-9

Warning against false love, 10,11

Conclusion, 12-13

2 John 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..."

THE ELDER,

There are two main usages of the word "elder" in the New Testament: 1) a person old in age (Acts 2:17) and 2) someone who holds the office or rank of leadership in the local church (Acts 20:17, 18; Ti 1:5,7). The "elder" here is the apostle John who holds rank in the cause of Christ.

Ac 20:17 "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church... 28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

1 Pe 5:1 "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed..."

Titus 1:5 "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop [a bishop is an elder] must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

To the elect lady and her children,

Some interpreters believe that the phrase "elect lady and her children" refers metaphorically to the local church in Ephesus and its constituents. However, it is more natural or normal to take this phrase literally as a woman and her children. John does not name this woman.

The "elect lady" is a lady chosen of God. This "elect lady" was probably a widow with children. God chooses women to do His work.

Apparently the "elect lady" exercised love at the expense of truth. She showed hospitality to itinerate false teachers. These people denied Jesus as the sovereign Son of God. Genuine hospitality does not advance error. Love should never violate truth; instead, genuine love upholds truth. There is a close relationship between truth and love in the Scriptures.

PRINCIPLE: True biblical love is always bound by truth.

APPLICATION: There is a close relationship between truth and love in the Word of God. Truth is the motivation and context of genuine Christian love. True love is bound by truth. Pop psychology says that we love people regardless of what they believe. It contends that we are to put aside what we believe. Divergence and pluralism are the new standard of orientation to people. The principles of the Word never surrender truth for love. Faithfulness to truth overshadows and governs true biblical love.

2 Co 13:7 "Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

Ga 2:11 "Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were

of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, 'If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?'"

Everything we specifically know about God is through the truth of Scripture.

Jn 8:31 "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

2 Ti 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Jas 1:18 "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

2 John 1 whom I love in truth,

"Love" here is not romantic love. "Whom" is in the plural, making reference to both the "elect lady" and her "children." John loves these people "in truth."

Jn 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

The "I" is emphatic in the Greek. It may be that the heretics did not love the church at Ephesus but merely preyed on them.

"Truth" and "love" are the two major subjects of 2 John. Christian love is more than mere sentiment. It revolves around the structure of truth. John loves the "elect lady" and her children in the sphere of truth.

John loves people within the framework of the "truth." He reiterates the word "truth" five times in the first four verses. "Truth" refers to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, so truth is the essential prerequisite for fellowship.

Ti 3:15 "All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen."

and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth

Many others knowledgeable of the truth and operating in the sphere of truth also love the "elect lady" and her children. We love the truth because we came to know Truth Himself.

1 Ti 2:4 "...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

PRINCIPLE: True Christian love revolves around the structure of truth.

APPLICATION: Christians do not love each other because they are temporarily compatible or naturally drawn to each other, but because of the truth they share with each other. Unbelievers can come to know the truth of Christianity in a casual sense, but not in a true and genuine sense.

Biblical love is always conditioned by truth. This love is more than mere sentiment. It does not lean on the attractiveness of its object. It rests on the Truth Himself, Jesus the Lord. Christian love rests on Christian truth. We cannot compromise truth and genuine love biblically. Biblical truth and love closely interrelate. They are inseparable traveling companions. Genuine love cannot exist apart from Bible truth. They can never be divorced.

2 John 1:2 because of the truth

Love comes from the truth of God's Word. Biblical love goes far beyond sentiment and human sympathy. Knowledge of the person and work of Christ cannot do anything else but affect the way we think of others.

which abides in us

The Word of God lives in and dwells in the believer.

Dt 6:6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart."

Dt 11:18 "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."

Jn 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

1Jn 2:14 "I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one."

PRINCIPLE: God always predicates biblical love on truth.

APPLICATION: Truth demands response. We cannot help but love others if we genuinely understand the love of God for us in Christ. Like begets like. Love begets love. God is love and those who love Him love others. Truth makes love possible. Truth binds Christians together in a special bond.

2 John 2 "...because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:..."

and will be with us forever

John now makes an assertion of promise. Truth will be with us forever in consort with Christ's promise. The Bible will never go out of existence. No one can escape its truth.

Mt 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

1Pe 1:22 "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because

'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.'" Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."

PRINCIPLE: The eternal Word of God can never be accommodated to current situations.

APPLICATION: Popular thinking of our day says that it does not matter what we believe as long as we love others. Difference of opinion does not matter. The primary value is the agreement to differ. This is not biblical. We must never accommodate truth to the situation because truth is more valuable than the situation.

Ps 138:2 "I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."

Jn 10:35 "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)..."

God's primary instrument for speaking to us is His Word. The Bible will safeguard us against fanaticism and heresy. God furthers His purpose in our lives through His Word. Maximum application of God's Word to experience brings us to the point of maturity. God's Word will change our attitude toward people and our outlook on life. We will love more and care more.

Ac 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

1Th 2:13 "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

2Ti 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

We can determine the measure of our spiritual growth by our attitude toward the Bible. We will grow in admiration of the meticulous accuracy of the Bible as a book without discrepancy, error or mistakes. God makes no mistakes in His Word. All agnostics, atheists

and detractors of the Bible will be long gone before the Bible goes out of existence. The Bible will march on into eternity. It is the one book that tells how everything will turn out.

1Co 2:13 “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

2Ti 3:16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 John 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.”

Verse three is the salutation to 2 John. A salutation is not a prayer but a confident declaration. God continues His word of assurance in verse 2 with this verse. Where truth and love prevail, grace, mercy and peace predominate.

Grace,

“Grace” is all that God is free to do for us because of Christ. Grace places emphasis on the work of God and not on our work. God extends His grace to us without merit on our part.

PRINCIPLE: God’s grace is all the resources He is able to give the believer freely.

APPLICATION: We never outgrow our need for God’s grace, mercy and peace. We cannot operate our Christian lives effectively without these graces. We could no more do that than we could exist without food and water.

God’s grace enables believers to give grace to others. It is not normally our nature to give. We are naturally born selfish. Jesus was grace personified. Grace is something given, not earned. We cannot curry brownie points with God. God donates His grace on a gratis basis.

Jn 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.... 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.”

Ro 12:3 “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

1Co 15:10 “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

2 Co 12:9 “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Ja 4:6 “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”

1Pe 5:10 “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

God corners the market on grace. He allows for no middlemen, no wholesaler or retailer. He gives it directly and without strings. He allows no black market on grace.

He 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

God gives His sustaining grace to enable us to maintain our spiritual equilibrium. When something upsets us, we display our old nature. We display this nature when we do not draw on God’s grace but rely on our own resources. We discover that we are not nearly as spiritual as we thought we were.

2 John 1:3 mercy,

Grace precedes mercy. “Mercy” is God’s compassion toward us. God freely pardons violation of His character. Mercy assumes need on the part of the subject.

La 3:22 "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

PRINCIPLE: Mercy freely flows out of God's grace.

APPLICATION: Mercy is akin to grace but it is not identical to grace. Mercy flows from God's grace. The reason God can be merciful toward us is because of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Sometimes parents cannot do anything for their children. All they can do is "pity" them--show compassion to them. There are times when we cannot nurse them or put a bandage on them.

2Sa 24:14 "And David said to Gad, 'I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.'"

Ps 23:6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever."

Ps 85:10 "Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed."

Ps 103:8 "The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."

Ro 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

2 Co 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort..."

Ep 2:4 "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us..."

We need God's mercy every day. We must come to the throne of grace to confess sins daily.

2 John 3 and peace

"Peace" is the internal tranquility that God gives to those who fellowship with Him. Peace brings harmony to the soul. There is no mercy until first God extends His grace. There is no peace until first God extends His mercy. Peace always follows grace and mercy.

will be with you

It is the believer's birthright to daily live in God's grace, mercy and peace. These three spiritual commodities are available to us at any moment in which we choose to draw upon them.

PRINCIPLE: Peace flows from God's grace and mercy.

APPLICATION: Every Christian has peace with God (Ro 5:1). Jesus resolved that issue once and for all. He settled that issue at the cross. However, not every Christian has the peace "of God" (Ph 4:6, 7).

Non-Christians try to find peace by drowning their heartaches in booze or drugs. They hate their lives. They can't wait until they can drown their sorrows. That is sublimation and escapism. They will never find peace in sublimation. Neither will Christians find peace in sublimation. They must come to grips with their problems and turn them over to the Lord.

What is eating you? Who is giving you grief? What is your problem? Do you know that God is tapping His foot waiting for you come to Him? Peace comes to us when we trust in Him.

Is 26:3 "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."

Jn 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Jn 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Ro 15:13 “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

1Th 5:23 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

God is the God of peace.

Ro 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

Ro 16:20 “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

Php 4:9 “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

He 13:20 “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Peace comes when we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us.

Ga 5:22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...”

Col 3:15 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

2 John 3 from God the Father

John assures his readers of the source of their grace, mercy and peace. Note the two occurrences of the word “from.” We do not get the three spiritual commodities of grace, mercy and peace from the natural world. They do not originate down here. The Father is one of two fountainheads of grace, mercy and peace.

The New Testament regularly uses the formula “God the Father.” There is no confusion on this issue. God is the Creator of everyone but the Father of few.

Mt 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

Jn 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

and from the Lord Jesus Christ,

The two givers (the Father and the Son) are equal givers – “from” (immediate personal source).

the Son of the Father,

This unique statement is the only occurrence of the phrase “the Son of the Father” in the New Testament. John designates this title here to put stress on the Incarnation of Christ. The Father and Son are coeternal and coequal. There never was nor ever will be anyone like God the Son.

PRINCIPLE: God is the only source of grace, mercy and peace.

APPLICATION: We do not get grace, mercy and peace in college or university. Professors there know nothing about these things. The tools they chose for arriving at truth will not allow them to discover these wonderful spiritual commodities. The only source of these spiritual commodities is found in God.

2 John 3 “in truth and love

We experience grace, mercy and peace in the sphere of truth and love. Truth and love are the conditions for grace, mercy and peace. The Christian walk rests on truth and is demonstrated in love.

Truth makes love discerning so love never undermines truth. Love moderates truth so that truth does not show itself in harshness. Fellowship always revolves around both truth and love. Truth is the sphere of principle and love is the sphere of attitude and action. Truth makes genuine love viable.

PRINCIPLE: God always conditions love by truth.

APPLICATION: We can emphasize love at the expense of truth and we can emphasize truth at the expense of love. Love must always be predicated on truth. Giving material aid without the context of truth is not a Christian act. Propagation of error in the name of love is not truth! That is simply sentimentality.

In an attempt to unite religions into an ecumenical movement, some religionists try to reduce the things they believe to almost zero. They cannot tolerate truth. The Bible repudiates such ideas.

Ep 4:15 “...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ...”

Jesus is truth personified. He is the love of God wrapped up as one incredible gift of God.

Jn 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Ep 4:20 “But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus...”

Jesus is also the personification of love.

2 Co 9:15 “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

1Ti 1:5 “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith...”

2Ti 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 John 4 I rejoiced greatly

John’s joy comes from the fact that the woman’s children, to whom he wrote 2nd John, walked in the truth.

that I have found some of your children

False teachers made inroads into the Christian community but some believers walked according to the truth of God’s revelation, His Word. Second generation Christians often wane from the faithful passion of their parents.

Ephesus was a great center for learning. It was the seat of philosophy, science and medicine. Some children of Christian parents may have fallen from the faith because of this schooling. Others came to Ephesus for business because it was a prosperous seaport. There was active nightlife, and crime was rampant throughout the city. Pagan religions dominated the landscape. There were many reasons why some children fell from the faith in Ephesus.

PRINCIPLE: Children, even in their adulthood, generally do not rise above the level of their parents spiritually.

APPLICATION: Parental responsibility goes beyond intellectual, social and physical care of children. Children need moral and spiritual direction. It is no excuse to say that my children do not like church or the youth group. God commands parents to guide their children responsibly while they are under their care. Children may not like the fact that you require them to come home at a

reasonable hour but you make that standard anyway. They may not want to go to school but you send them anyway.

You say, "If I place high standards for my children, they may rebel against me." That is a

possibility but there is a much greater possibility that if you do not provide high standards for them they will rebel against you and the Lord.

Pr 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

We can claim the promise that "he will not depart from it." That means that if we inculcate

Christian values in our children, those values will never leave them. All of the excursions in the world will not eradicate that training. They may rebel against the Lord but they will always carry Christian values with them.

You may ask, "Where did I make my mistake with my children? Why did they go astray?" In some cases, there may be no answers to that question. In other cases, there are. Some parents set the values of their children by living out their own values. If their primary value is acquiring possessions, their children will pick that up. If the Lord is second, then their children will put God second or third in their lives.

Your daughter will be just like you, mother. Your son will be just like you, father. They will hold the same attitudes as you do toward the Bible, toward God, toward values in life. They will talk like you and they will walk like you. If you become inebriated, they will become drunkards as well. If you don't read the Bible and apply it to your life, they will not do so, either.

Water seldom rises higher than its source. There are exceptions to this but we are presenting the general pattern here.

It breaks the hearts of some parents to find that their children no longer walk in the truth. The Lord is secondary and trivialized in their lives.

2 John 1:4b walking in truth

Fidelity to truth is a core Christian value. John discovered on his travels that the lady's children of 2nd John lived out their Christianity. They went on with the Lord. Nothing delights the hearts of parents more than to know that their children walk with the Lord.

Walking is a figure of speech for living. Walking in the truth is living in the truth. Walking in the truth is more than obtaining a corpus of doctrine. Christianity is more than an intellectual exercise. It should be something that shapes our attitudes and behavior. Truth shapes total conduct by internalizing its principles.

1Jn 1:6 "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Ro 10:2 "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God."

PRINCIPLE: Fidelity to truth is a core Christian value.

APPLICATION: The Word of God directs and molds our values and attitudes toward life. If we apply the Word to our experience daily, it will change us and make us more like the Lord Jesus. God gives us divine life that He might mold us into the image of Christ. God will reproduce the life of Christ in us.

Ga 1:15 "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood..."

Ga 4: 9 "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you..."

The Word of God will also cast light on the dark places where God calls us to walk.

2Co 4:2 "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

2 John 1:4c as we received commandment from the Father

Faithfulness to God's commandment is the foundation of true Christian living. The lady's children of 2nd John made a close correspondence between how they lived their lives and God's commandment or His Word.

True Christianity cannot separate truth, love and application of truth to experience. Love without truth is mere sentiment. Application of truth to experience without love is simply ceremony. Truth must always direct our love.

Ga 2:5 "...to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

Ga 3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?"

Ga 5:7 "You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

Ep 6:14 "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness..."

2Th 2:10 "...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

2Ti 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

1Pe 1:22 "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..."

PRINCIPLE: Faithfulness to God's Word is the foundation of Christian living.

APPLICATION: Love without application of truth to experience is mere sentiment. It is deficient of reality. Service without love is servility. True Christianity harmonizes doctrinal orientation to truth and living truth out in experience.

Continuance is proof of conversion. The evidence of divine life is when people live out what they believe.

Jn 8:31 "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 'And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

Jn 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."

Col 1:23 "...if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."

1Jn 2:19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us."

There is a point when children are too old for parents to do anything about their lifestyles. All they can do then is to hold them up before the Lord.

2 John 1:5 "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."

The thrust of John's argument is that Christians should be wary with their hospitality. False teachers were roaming the territory, and people committed to truth should not give hospitality to them. Before he sounds a warning about this, he challenges Christians to practice divine love.

John reasons in a circle in verses 5 and 6. Application of truth to experience results in love toward other Christians (v. 5). Love also lives according to God's principles (v. 6). God tightly weaves together love with living according to the principles of His Word.

And now

With the word "now," John turns to the main thrust of the letter – the relationship between truth and love. The church in Ephesus stood in peril of false teaching, and love without truth puts the church in danger.

I plead with you, lady,

"Plead" is more authoritative than "beseech." It is directly personal and not an exhortation. It is a request among equals. John requests that this influential lady manifests genuine biblical love, not phony or sentimental love toward the false teachers.

not as though I wrote a new commandment to you,

The content of the "new commandment" is to "love one another." This is not a "new" commandment in that it did not originate with the apostle John. It originated with the Lord Jesus

Mt 22:37 "Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 'This is the first and great commandment. 39 'And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Jn 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Ro 13:10 "Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

1Jn 2:7 "Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning."

but that which we have had from the beginning:

John identifies himself with the lady and her children by "we have had." The commandment they had was from the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry.

that we love one another

The words "one another" indicate reciprocity. True believers reciprocate love shown to them by fellow Christians.

1Jn 3:11 "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another..."

John exhorts his readers no less than ten times in his writings to love each other. He places great emphasis on this subject because of its importance to the integrity of Christianity.

PRINCIPLE: We measure the integrity of our Christianity by our love for one another.

APPLICATION: It appears that we are very slow to learn how to love one another. It seems that if we do disagree, then we cannot agree on the spirit in which to disagree. True love seeks a way to be constructive in a negative situation. This love does not seek to possess or control the other person.

The most difficult thing God calls upon believers to do is to love one another. We can trace most relationship problems among Christians to lack of love. Some of us do truly love but we do not know how to show it. Some men love their wives but do not know how to declare it. It is always crucial for lovers to express their love and demonstrate their love. We violate biblical love if we take it for granted. "Well, she knows that I love her." If that is so, then tell her how. Does she have to guess that you love her?

Jn 15:17 "These things I command you, that you love one another."

1Co 13:1 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."

1Pe 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'"

Love presents the patent test of the genuineness of belief. Love is hard to counterfeit. We can tell whether our belief is genuine by the nature of our love.

True love does not lie beyond the sphere of action. Love as an emotion or sentiment has no accountability. Faith applies truth to experience. It is a response to the grace of God in Christ. Love does not come by a resolve to obey God but from trust in Him and acting on that trust.

2 John 1:6 “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.”

The blessed circular logic of verses 5 and 6 shows how love and the application of truth to experience are vitally tied together.

- Applying God’s principle to experience produces love (v. 5)
- Love in turn produces application of truth to experience (v. 6a)
- Application of God’s Word to experience produces love (v. 6b)

This is love,

To allay any doubt about the nature of Christian love, John declares that love is in essence applying God’s Word to experience. Love consists in appropriating God’s Word to experience. Love finds its manifestation in responding to God’s will.

1Jn 5:2 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

that we walk according to His commandments.

We love other Christians the best when we do God’s will. John interprets love and application of truth to experience in terms of their reciprocal relationship between each other.

Jn 14:15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.... 21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

Jn 15:10 “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

PRINCIPLE: Incomplete response to God’s will is derived from incomplete love for God.

APPLICATION: Love outside the standards of God’s will and Word can sink into sentimentality. A believer who truly loves walks “in the truth” (v. 4). Conformity to truth is proof that we love the Lord.

Joshua 1:8 “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Jn 13:17 “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

Jas 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Don’t believe in love at first sight – at least take a second glance! Shakespeare said, “Love reasons without reason.” That is the opposite of what God says. God says that love always contains content.

Love makes obedience light. Divine love on the part of the believer bestows benefit on the object of his redemption – the Lord Jesus. Keeping God’s will out of a sense of duty and with little love for God is not true love. True love is response to God from the heart.

2 John 1:6b This is the commandment,

God’s command is a statement of His will. Love for other Christians is doing the will of God. All of God’s commands issue out of love and actions that manifest love. We see love for each other in applying truth to experience. God’s truth opens up the nature of true love.

that as you have heard from the beginning,

God gives the content of love by revelation. He states the nature of love in propositions in His Word; therefore, love is more than sentimental relationship.

PRINCIPLE: Love is more than sentiment for it also involves content.

APPLICATION: Man cannot artificially produce divine love by keeping the law. This is not true love for God. Self-justification is not love. A truly regenerate person loves God and seeks to please Him.

Facts that are not frankly faced have a way of stabbing us in the back.

It is twice as hard to crush a half-truth as a whole lie.

Truth is what God says about a thing.

Beware of half-truths; you may get hold of the wrong half.

Nothing is more harmful to a new truth than an old error.

All of God's principles have intrinsic value since they come from an absolute being. Any violation of them constitutes sin.

2 John 1:6c you should walk in it

A command cannot generate love but love can be commanded. Love manifests itself in responding to God's will. Love for God is equal to keeping His commandments (Jn 14:15,31; 15:10,14). By the phrase, "walk in it," John is saying in effect, "Put into practice your love for God, and don't reinterpret God's Word for sentimental reasons. Don't yield to false teachers simply because they need a place to eat and sleep."

Ro 13:8 "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

PRINCIPLE: Spirituality is more than dull and dead orthodoxy; it is vital response to God's will.

APPLICATION: Walking in the truth can be as dry as last year's bird nest. Orthodoxy without "orthopraxy" can be dry as dust. Many churches are like this today. They do not experience truth; they just assert truth. They are sound in doctrine but sound asleep in vitality.

Pharisees of 2000 years ago believed their Bible but they were dead to a vital walk with God. Walking in the truth is more than believing the truth. It is practicing the truth. This involves loving one another.

2 John 1:7 "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."

John now moves to the occasion for his writing of 2nd John – safeguard of truth. This is a challenge to resist false teachers. Verse seven is the reason for the challenge in verse six. It is a warning not to propagate error by hosting false teachers and thereby giving them credibility. Love requires a condition to its integrity -- the truth of God's Word.

John gives **3 warnings:**

- Warning against many deceivers abroad, v 7.
- Warning against receiving a half-reward, v 8.
- Warning against apostates who reject the deity of Christ, vv 9-11.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world

There were few suitable motels in the first century so traveling teachers stayed in homes of the locality where they ministered. Many of these teachers were imposters. Some of them taught Gnosticism which held that, since matter is evil, God could not dwell in

human flesh.

The presence of false teachers proves damaging to the exercise of mutual love because their teaching negates the essence of Christianity, the incarnation. The false teacher, Cerinthus, preyed not on pagans but on true Christians.

who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.

The essential error rampant in John's day related to the doctrine of Christ. They denied that He came in the flesh (1 Jn 5:1). They could not conceive of the fact that Jesus was both truly God and perfect man. All of Christianity revolves around this doctrine.

1Jn 4:2 "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."

PRINCIPLE: There is a need for great discrimination in the present-day culture of non-discrimination.

APPLICATION: We live in a day when almost no one wants to exercise spiritual discrimination because we live in a culture that neutralizes truth. No one wants to be dogmatic or claim anything definitely. David Wells, in his book No Place for Truth, comes to the conclusion that evangelical Christians of our day have arrived at the point where there is no place for truth. He chronicles doctrinal death among evangelicals. He says that this cliché culture has taken a dreadful toll on the human spirit, emptying it of "meaning, depth and morality."

Churches today refashion their faith increasingly on therapies centered on self. They have lost the truth that stands outside human experience. Instead of standing apart from the blandishments of the world, they are absorbed into it.

We have to be accurate in the truth of God. If a chemist is not exact in his measurements, he may blow the lab into pieces. We live in a day when anything is good enough when it comes to truth. Anything is not good enough and almost is not close enough. Two plus two never equals five. There is no place for sloppiness in expounding the truth of the Word of God.

2 John 1:7b This is a deceiver

John now stamps the person who denies the incarnation as a "deceiver" and "an antichrist." John does not mean here that the deceivers of his day were "the" Antichrist of the Tribulation.

A "deceiver" is a religious seducer who leads others astray (1Ti 4.1). A deceiver is an imposter, a faker, who misleads people doctrinally.

and an antichrist

An "antichrist" is someone opposed to Christ. He may usurp the role of Christ (1Jn 2:18). The word "antichrist" occurs only five times in the Bible and all five are in John's writings (1Jn 2:18 [2 times], 1Jn 2:22; 4:3).

PRINCIPLE: Many fakers surreptitiously sneak into the local church with their false doctrine.

APPLICATION: The world today is filled with phonies and fakers. Many of them are in the local church. They sneak in surreptitiously. They do not want people to know what they truly believe.

2Pe 2:1 "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."

Jude 4 "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

If a person is wrong about Jesus Christ, he is wrong about everything from God's viewpoint. The person and work of Jesus Christ is the standard for measuring everything that matters to God. We can detect false teachers by their thinking about Christ.

Mt 22:41 "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?'"

Antichristian teaching essentially is that teaching which repudiates the deity of Christ and His true humanity. If we do not honor the Son, we do not honor the Father.

Jn 5:23 "...that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

2 John 1:8 Look to yourselves,

2John 8 "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward."

Verse 8 contains John's second warning. This is a warning about rewards.

Look to yourselves,

This is an exhortation to the "elect lady" and her children. "Look" is in the present tense indicating that we are to be continuously on our guard against false doctrine. No believer who wishes to stay on his spiritual toes wants to be tainted to the slightest degree with false teaching. This is especially true in widespread defection from the faith. It is easy to get caught up in the crowd.

Mt 24:4 "And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 'For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.'"

The verb "look" means to have spiritual perception and carries a more intent, earnest seeing or contemplation – take heed. Believers need to watch out for spiritual disaster. They are not to be blind to spiritual deception.

that we do not lose those things we worked for,

Compromise with false teaching leads to loss of reward. Loss of salvation is not in view here, but loss of reward.

PRINCIPLE: The existence of error demands self-examination.

APPLICATION: There is an issue in which each Christian should be duly concerned about himself – the area of false doctrine. Participation in false teaching negates reward in heaven. Any departure from the faith results in regrettable loss of reward. Christians need to place themselves under continuous guard against this. If we do, we will protect our spiritual gains here on earth.

Any true Christian who gets involved with a cult will lose his reward. He will not lose his salvation but his reward. He did not work for His salvation, so he cannot lose it. He did not work for it in the first place so he cannot lose it in the second place. However, since he did give effort for his reward, he can lose reward. Anything he deserves, he can lose. He will throw away all his service for the Lord. Everything from that moment on is wood, hay and stubble.

We Christians cannot afford to relax our vigilance against false teaching. If we do, we may lose reward. Our eternal life is eternally secure but our reward is not. We want our fruit to last eternally.

Col 2:18 "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind..."

There are many religious "sweet talkers" out there. They will seduce you if they can. They will beguile you, hoodwink you, bamboozle you and fool you. If you cave into them, you will lose your reward over there.

2Co 13:5 "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified."

1Ti 4:16 "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

Re 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

2 John 1:8b but that we may receive a full reward

The “lady” and her children will lose their reward for faithful missionary service if they fall for the false teachers. If they allow false teachers to proselytize their community of believers, they will lose those for whom they labor.

“Reward” is the term for a day laborer’s wage. People who work for a living should receive due wages for their labor.

Mt 5:12 “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

1Co 3:8 “Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

Generally God rewards hospitality (Mt 10:41; 25:40) but not in this case. If a Christian does not discriminate between truth and error, she will lose her reward. This loss of reward would only be partial. She would still receive some reward (1 Co 3:11-15).

Col 2:18 “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.”

Col 3:23 “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

PRINCIPLE: Christians should aim for a “full reward” in heaven.

APPLICATION: Even if Christians lose some reward they will not lose all reward. God does not forget our labor of love (He 6:10). If there is anything coming to us, we should get it all. We should get a “full reward.”

It is quite clear that some will not receive full reward. Work and effort for Christ can be lost. Do not let anyone cheat you out of your reward. Do not let some fast-talking, religious salesman cheat you out of your reward.

Mt 5:11 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Mt 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Mt 6:16 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 “so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Ro 14:12 “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

1Co 3:8 “Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

1Co 4:5 “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.”

2Co 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Re 22:12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

We have a short time down here to be effective; then God will usher us into His presence. Will there be any crown on our head there? Will there be any reward, any fruit? Will you have little to present to the Master? You will stand there alone. You will be accountable for the life that God gave you. He will search your hearts and give a reward for what is done for His glory.

God always rewards justly. He will not give us an A when we deserve a B. Some of us deserve a D. If so, God will not give us a C. Rewards are not given; they are deserved. God always rewards us according to absolute fairness.

2 John 1:9 “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.”

John now demonstrates the gravity of defecting to the false teachers (cf. verse 8). Christian courtesy and hospitality do not extend to false teachers. It is a grave issue to tamper with false teachers.

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

The word “transgresses” should be translated “goes onward.” This is a sarcastic allusion to Gnostic false teachers who were trying to bring the church into their fold. These false teachers thought that their teaching went beyond the traditional view of Christ.

The transgressor here is a Christian who defects from the pure doctrine of Christ to a supposedly higher view of truth. Gnostics claimed to be advanced thinkers for the enlightened, but John warns against teaching that does not stay within the structure of apostolic teaching.

He who abides in the doctrine of Christ

The term “abides” indicates that John speaks of vital belief in the truth. “Abides” indicates that this person is a Christian. Note that in the previous verse John warns against loss of reward (v. 8).

True belief always revolves around a proper view of Christ. Dead orthodoxy cannot produce vital fellowship with God. It is one thing for the truth to abide in the believer and it is another for the believer to remain in the truth.

1Jn 2:22 “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”

has both the Father and the Son

If we confess the Son, we possess the Father. If we deny the Son, we renounce the Father. We cannot deny Christ and believe in the Father at the same time. That is why non-Christian religions cannot be true. It is not true that there are many roads to heaven, for either Jesus is who He claimed to be or He is a faker. To advance beyond Christ is to reject Christ.

Those who embrace Jesus Christ embrace the Father as well. They have dynamic relationship to both.

Jn 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’ 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

The argument here is not that mere orthodoxy leads to dynamic fellowship but that genuine fellowship issues from right doctrine.

PRINCIPLE: Those who go beyond the bounds of Scripture are not of God.

APPLICATION: Whenever some teacher comes along and professes some special new revelation, be wary of him for is a faker.

Groups that claim that the Bible is not fully sufficient to tell us all that we know about God are in error. The test of truth is always the Word of God and the person of Christ.

The exhortation to deal definitely with false teachers appears strange in a day when compromise, accommodation and doctrinal confusion reign supreme. Much of truth today is watered down, diluted and adulterated.

2 John 1:10 “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him...”

We come now to the second warning – intolerance for the access of antichrists to the local congregation.

If anyone comes to you

Traveling teachers depended on local people for lodging and finances (Ac 18:2-3; 21:7; 3 Jn 5-8). The “if” indicates the reality of the attendance of false teachers in the church at Ephesus.

and does not bring this doctrine,

“This doctrine” is the doctrine of the incarnate Christ. False teachers who denied the incarnation did visit the elect lady’s congregation. Their purpose was to spread Gnostic doctrine.

For the third time, John uses the word “doctrine.” It is impossible to be a Christian without doctrine. We have to know Whom we believe, what we believe and why we believe it. If a person is wrong about Christ, he is wrong about everything in Christianity. Jesus Christ is the substructure for everything in the Bible.

PRINCIPLE: There is no latitude for difference in the doctrine of the incarnation.

APPLICATION: There are doctrines in the Bible that leave room for honest difference of opinion among evangelicals; however, there is no latitude in the doctrine of Christ. If we make a mistake about Jesus Christ, it will cost us our souls. He is the only way of access into heaven.

Jn 10:7 “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 “All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

Jn 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way [literally, road], the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Ac 4:12 “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

1 Co 3:11 “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Col 2:9 “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

2 John 1:10b do not receive him into your house

John warned his readers not to provide hospitality to false teachers. There is no compromise here: “Do not recognize him as a genuine Christian by giving him hospitality. Do not give him the credibility of a Christian.” The elect lady already had extended hospitality indiscriminately to these false teachers because the phrase “do not” means to stop doing something you are already doing. She provided food and lodging for antichrists! She invested her resources for the devil!

nor greet him

The first century person used the word “greet” for the arrival and departure of a visitor (2Co 13:11). It was a cordial salutation. John says in effect, “Do not encourage false teachers. Don’t give them a warm welcome to your congregation.” This applies solely to antichrists. We should not over interpret this to mean that we should forbid anyone who disagrees with our point of view. John’s reference here is to teachers of false doctrine and not merely the believers of it.

PRINCIPLE: False love loves without discrimination.

APPLICATION: Dealing ruthlessly with false doctrine seems unduly harsh to the modern mind. The problem, however, lies with modern man, not with God. North American and European culture tends to be exceedingly tolerant of religious differences. God

does not mollicoddle this same distortion. God cannot contradict His own absolutes. Man is relative and God is absolute. The more absolutes in which one believes, the more conviction he has about what is true and right.

There are two extremes to this issue: 1) There are those who coddle any idea that comes down the pike; they use no discrimination regarding with whom they fellowship. These types are maudlin and mawkish in their love. 2) Then there are those who separate themselves from almost anyone who even slightly disagrees with them. Both of these extremes are wrong. The issue at hand concerns those teachers who deny fundamental Christian doctrine.

2 John 1:11 "...for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."

for

The word "for" gives the reason for the sharp prohibition of verse 10 – "Do not greet them."

he who greets him shares in his evil deeds

To show hospitality to false teachers is to partake of their heresy. The word "shares" conveys close union and active participation. This word never carries casual or superficial connection.

PRINCIPLE: Showing hospitality to heretics helps propagate their error because it gives credibility to their teaching.

APPLICATION: Our generation is tolerant of heresy, whereas God says that we are not to have tolerance for it at all. Biblically, love has its limits. It is not love to extend hospitality to heresy.

In his last book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, Francis Schaffer wrote that evangelicals of our generation would accommodate truth to fit the culture of our generation, thus subverting our own beliefs. Many are too ready to engage in doubt even about the verities of the faith. They have a shrinking sense of the peril of heresy.

The issue here is not an unloving attitude toward heretics but decisive dealing with error. When Christians deviate from the truth, they defect from God who is the truth. God is not tolerant of differences in terms of content of truth. God expects Christians to be courteous and tolerant in terms of mode.

Ga 1:8 "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

1Co 16:22 "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!"

2Co 6:14 "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."

Ep 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."

1Ti 6:5 "...useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself."

2Ti 3:5 "...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

Those who give credibility to teachers participate in their teaching, whether good or evil. If we wish heretics well, we fellowship with their heresy. We fellowship in their teaching. Instead of rebuking them, we unintentionally assist their principles and spread their teaching.

2 John 1:12-13 “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.”

We come to the conclusion of 2 John in verses 12 and 13.

Having many things to write to you,

John has more to say on the subject of 2nd John.

I did not wish to do so with paper and ink;

“Paper” here is papyrus, not parchment (which is much more costly). They made papyrus by placing strips of pith side-by-side and then crosswise with a paste. They made “ink” from lampblack, carbon or soot.

It is one thing to write something on paper but it is another to speak personally “face to face.”

but I hope to come to you and speak face to face,

John hopes to visit his readers personally to explain more fully the principles behind 2nd John.

that our joy may be full

The readers of 2nd John will be full of joy when John comes to explain himself more fully. Spoken words face to face are a more suitable method of interaction than writing.

The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen

The reference here is to two Christian women and their children. The mother of the 2nd set of children may have died. These children may be the nephews and nieces of the elect lady (v. 1). These “children” may be those who informed John of the elect lady’s error in entertaining false teachers.

PRINCIPLE: There is joy in Christian fellowship.

APPLICATION: Far too many of us endure religion rather than enjoy the richness of Christian fellowship.