

2 John WALKING IN THE TRUTH

“When Pilate asked cynically, ‘What is truth?’ (John 18:38) he reflected the view of many today. Postmodernism views the concept of truth with skepticism. Many believe that there is no such thing as absolute truth or, if there is, that it cannot be known. Certainly, they argue, there is no religious truth; religion is merely a personal preference, like one’s taste in art, music, or literature.

But truth—absolute divine truth—does exist, and it is the most important reality in the universe... Believers must be committed to the truth, because we exist in the world, which is the realm of Satan (1 John 5:19), the ‘father of lies’ (John 8:44)...

In a world of lies, the church is called to be the ‘pillar and support of the truth’ (1 Tim. 3:15)... Any so-called church that fails to exercise its stewardship of His truth faces God’s judgement—just as the Jews did for failing to uphold and live the Old Testament truth entrusted to them (cf. Rom. 2:23-24). But throughout its history, the true church has clung tenaciously to the truth, despite the storms of persecution, the sting of rejection, and the assaults of enemies both from inside and outside its ranks (cf. Acts 20:29-30). And countless thousand have suffered martyrdom rather than compromise or abandon the truth.

Strategically, the final epistles of the New Testament emphasize the priority of the truth (2 and 3 John), and the need to contend for it in the face of apostate liars (Jude).”
MacArthur

ἀλήθεια *alétheia*, *al-ay'-thi-a*; *truth, veracity*. Truth appears five times in 2 John and six times in 3 John.

Vv. 1-2 John refers to himself as an elder (*presbyteros*). It is an official designation of one who has been duly entrusted by Christ with the care and spiritual wellbeing of His church (1 Tim. 3:1-8). Elders are an important part of church leadership. John was also an Apostle chosen by Christ to usher in the church age. Anyone who says that they are a true Apostle like John and the eleven others Christ chose, is a liar and is not to be trusted in any way.

- Whether John wrote to a church or to a sister in Christ is up for debate. What’s important is the reason behind the letter. John wrote to clarify the importance of embracing God’s inerrant truth over what man considers to be truth, which is relative and seemingly everchanging.

- John points out an important fact about what it means to walk in the truth. Our spiritual gait, which is a particular way or manner of moving forward in the truth, determines how well we love in the truth.
- John loved in the truth because he knew the truth. In other words, truth became part of him in ways that moved him to agape love others in the truth.

“I love in the truth” The personal pronoun “I” is emphatic in the Greek. John says with confidence that he loves in the truth.

“Given that truth is so important to God, and is the very nature of Jesus, we need to get ourselves into line with Him. Truth and truthfulness must become profoundly important to us as well, even if it makes us the odd one out, and even if it costs us.”

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John 16:13a *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

“To minimize the truth in the name of love is to abandon biblical love, which is based on the truth. God’s purposes will never be accomplished by compromising truth; love for souls is never manifested by minimizing the truth.” MacArthur

Vs. 3 *The grace, mercy, and peace God has for us are all given in truth and love. Apart from God’s truth and love, we can never really have grace, mercy, and peace. Guzik*

Vs. 4 *To be exceedingly glad that some of the elect ladies’ children were walking in the truth implies that they chose to believe God and obey Him over the false teaching that had led some away from the truth.*

1 Jn. 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

- Walking in the truth implies a steady, unfaltering, persistent, steadfast gait that is brought about through the exercise of knowing the truth of God’s Word.

Psalms 19:8 *the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;*

περιπατέω peripatéō, per-ee-pat-eh'-o; *to tread all around, i.e. walk at large (especially as proof of ability); figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or votary [faithful follower]);—go, be occupied with, walk (about). Strong’s Concordance*

*“The phrase **walking in the truth** refers to moving through life controlled by the truth; it is the equivalent to walking in the light (1 John 1:7). Walking is a frequent New Testament metaphor for the Christian life. Believers ‘walk in newness of life’ (Rom. 6:4), walk by faith, not by sight’ (2 Cor. 5:7), ‘walk by the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:16, 25), ‘walk in good works’ (Eph. 2:10), ‘walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [they] have been called’ (Eph. 4:1), ‘walk in love’ (Eph. 5:2), ‘walk as children of light’ (Eph. 5:8), ‘walk in wisdom’ (Eph. 5:15), ‘walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects’ (Col. 1:10), ‘walk in a manner worthy of God who calls [them] into His own kingdom and glory’ (1 Thess. 2:12), ‘walk in the same manner as [Jesus] walked’ (1 John 2:6), and ‘walk according to His commandments’ (2 John 6).” MacArthur*

Vv. 5-6 *“The integrity of our Christian life can be measured by our love for one another (as in John 13:35 and 1 John 4:20-21).” Guzik*

John 13:35 *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

1 Jn. 4:20-21 *20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

- It is difficult for some believers to put agape love into practice, especially if they aren't convinced that they are truly and unconditionally loved by God. But those lack of faith feelings must be put aside for the sake of obedience to God's commands. There is something cathartic that occurs when we chose God's ways over our own knowing that His ways are best. To walk in love is a command, not a wish or desire, and if He is to rule preeminent in our lives then we must take His commands seriously.

Vs. 7 *“Biblical love does not imply a naïve, uncritical, undiscerning acceptance of anyone who claims to represent Jesus Christ. Thus, having stressed the importance of love, John immediately set limits on it. Believers cannot, in the name of love, embrace any of the **many deceivers** who **have gone out into the world**. Followers of the true Christ cannot love antichrist; those who are committed to biblical truth cannot have fellowship with those who pervert it (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-15)... Deceivers translates the plural form of *planos*, which literally means ‘a wanderer’ (the English word ‘planet’ derives from it). In this case, it refers to those who wander from the truth of Scripture; who corrupt it; who lead others astray from it; who are impostors (Paul called such people ‘false brethren in 2 Cor. 11:26 and Gal. 2:4; cf. Jude’s description of them as ‘wandering stars’ headed for the ‘black darkness’ of eternal judgment [vs. 13]).” MacArthur*

2 Cor. 6:14-15 *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?*

Vv. 8-13 The first three chapters of the book of Revelation center on Christ's judgement of seven churches that, in my opinion, represent the spiritual condition of any given church or denomination throughout church history. Only two churches, the church in Philadelphia and the church in Smyrna, remained true to the Lord. The others allowed wolves to come in and distort the truth, which they were judged for.

Vv. 8-9 *"Any so-called church that fails to exercise its stewardship of His truth faces God's judgement."* MacArthur

- We have been entrusted with the spiritual wellbeing of CC Oley; therefore we will be judged on how well we protected her spiritual integrity before one another as well as before the Lord. We must strive to stay true to the Lord no matter what might occur in this godless world, lest we lose what we have gained by being a part of a church that does not take God's commands seriously.

Rev. 2:8-9,10 *"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. 9 "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

Rev. 3:7-8,10 *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*

Vv. 10-11 *"During the first two centuries the gospel was taken from place to place by traveling evangelists and teachers. Believers customarily took these missionaries into their homes and gave them provisions for their journey when they left. Since Gnostic teachers also relied on this practice..., 2 John was written to urge discernment in supporting traveling teachers; otherwise, someone might unintentionally contribute to the propagation of heresy rather than truth."* Intro to 2 John NIV Study Bible

Vv. 12-13 *The most likely idea is that the elect lady (a particular church) had an elect sister — other "sister" churches from which John brings a greeting. Guzik*