

2 John

2 John 1:1-2 From the Elder. To the chosen lady and her children: I love all of you in the truth, and all those who know the truth love you. ²We love you because of the truth that lives in us and will be with us forever.

...**From the Elder**... can mean an older person you should respect or a church leader. Here it probably means that John is highly respected in the church. John was a pastor for them.

...**the chosen lady and her children**... probably means the church and all the members of the church.

...**love all of you in the truth**... Godly love for all who follow the truth of God's Word.

Christian love is more than just love for another human. It is love based on the truth Jesus has shown us. Truth is the foundation for God's love.

2 John 1:3 Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, will be with us in truth and love.

...**Grace, mercy, and peace**... Paul and Peter always began their letters with grace and peace. John added mercy.

God's grace is positively giving sinners what they do not deserve. (We are saved by grace. We are not good enough. We do not deserve salvation. But God's grace saved us.)

God's mercy is not giving sinners what they do deserve. (We deserve eternal punishment for our sins. But God's mercy did not punish us.)

...**the Father and his Son**... blessings are from Father and Son equally. We have one God.

2 John 1:4 I was very happy to learn that some of your children are following the way of truth, as the Father commanded us.

...**following the way of truth**... a real relationship with God. It is a joy to see believers still faithful to the truth. Following the way of truth means we show love for one another.

John 13:34 I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.

2 John 1:5-6 And now, dear lady, this is not a new command but is the same command we have had from the beginning. I ask you that we all love each other. ⁶And love means living the way God commanded us to live. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is this: Live a life of love.

Our walk with God is built on His commandment to **love each other**.

John 13:34-35 I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you. ³⁵All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.

We must walk in truth and in love. Obey His commands and love each other.

2 John 1:7 Many false teachers are in the world now who do not confess that Jesus Christ came to earth as a human. Anyone who does not confess this is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ.

Many deceivers try to make the Christian way blurry. They try many different ways to draw us away from the truth. These false teachers have been at work for a long time!

...**Jesus Christ came to earth as a human**... both God and man. Some false teachers say Jesus was just a man. Wrong! Some false teachers say Jesus was God, but not a man. Wrong! Those teachings are NOT Christian.

...**an enemy of Christ**... Greek = *antichristos*; antichrist. The spirit of antichrist denies everything Jesus did for us to save us by dying on the cross and being raised from the dead.

2 John 1:8 Be careful yourselves that you do not lose everything you have worked for, but that you receive your full reward.

Every believer can receive a ...**full reward**. Don't let the false teachers pull you away from the truth and make you lose your reward.

Maybe not lose your salvation. Maybe only lose your reward. What would that mean in heaven? I don't want to risk it! I want to do everything I can to receive the full reward – whatever that means.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now, a crown is being held for me—a crown for being right with God. The Lord, the judge who judges rightly, will give the crown to me on that day—not only to me but to all those who have waited with love for him to come again.

2 John 1:9 Anyone who goes beyond Christ's teaching and does not continue to follow only his teaching does not have God. But whoever continues to follow the teaching of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

...**goes beyond Christ's teaching**... goes farther than is right; goes to some extreme. That is what the Gnostics claimed they had. They claimed they had a little more knowledge than anyone else. They thought they were "super-saints."

Love for God means you support the truth and reject anything against the truth.

...**continues to follow**... permanently. Whoever makes their home in the teaching of Christ. Whoever puts down roots in the teaching of Christ. Whoever does not move away from the teaching of Christ. The Gospel had never changed. We should not change our belief in the Gospel.

2 John 1:10-11 If someone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not welcome or accept that person into your house. ¹¹ If you welcome such a person, you share in the evil work.

...**this teaching**... that Jesus is God and He came to earth as a human (verse 7). Jesus is completely human and completely divine (God).

We should not accept that false teaching, and not accept the false teachers into our homes. Do not show any kind of support for the false teaching. We must be careful to obey the scriptures.

...**If you welcome such a person**... do not identify with that person. If you support a false teacher you become a partner with them in their sin.

Maybe that seems too mean. But we must have a strong commitment to the truth. We need to separate ourselves from false teachings.

2 John 1:12-13 I have many things to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so we can be full of joy. ¹³ The children of your chosen sister greet you.

A letter cannot substitute for personal fellowship. It is better to express yourself in person than to try to express yourself in writing. John hoped to encourage them in person.

...**The children of your chosen sister**... probably means the Christians from another church.

3 John

John wrote this letter to try to correct problems in the church. The main problem was from a church leader named Diotrephes. He was trying to control the church by not allowing anyone else to speak or teach in the church.

1 John emphasizes the church family of God held together with love – love for each other.

2 John warns about false teachers who try to lead us away from true love for Christ and true love for each other.

3 John emphasizes that truth is most important.

My life in God = salvation.

My life with God = communion and fellowship.

My life for God = service – walking and working in the truth. Love can become very sloppy if it is not kept under control by love. 3 John focuses mostly on my life for God.

3 John was written to one person named Gaius. We don't know much about Gaius. He was a leader in one of the churches that John took care of. (Probably in western Turkey).

3 John 1:1 From the Elder. To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth:

...**the Elder**... is the apostle John. The same John who wrote the gospel John, 1 John, 2 John and Revelation. John was the elder because he was old. John was the elder because he was a church leader. He had authority in the church.

...**Gaius**... was a common Roman name. He was a Christian in one of the churches that John took care of. John called him a ...**dear friend**... 4 times in this letter.

...**whom I love in the truth**... Gaius lived by the truth of God's Word. That means he walked and worked in love. He demonstrated love.

3 John 1:2 My dear friend, I know your soul is doing fine, and I pray that you are doing well in every way and that your health is good.

This greeting might mean that Gaius was physically weak and spiritually strong.

This greeting was a common way of beginning a personal letter.

We were created with spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The spirit allows us to communicate with God.

The soul makes us aware of God. It includes our personality, or will, our emotions.

The body is the physical part that our spirit and soul express through.

If your health is not good, it is very hard to grow spiritually. Jesus ministry included a lot of healing so people were ready to learn how to grow spiritually.

3 John 1:3-4 I was very happy when some brothers and sisters came and told me about the truth in your life and how you are following the way of truth. ⁴ Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear that my children are following the way of truth.

Other people in the church saw how Gaius was ...**following the way of truth**... following God's Word in his beliefs and in his daily life. What do people say about you?

...**my children**... maybe John had led them to Jesus. For sure John was like a spiritual father to them. John had the heart of a pastor.

3 John 1:5-6 My dear friend, it is good that you help the brothers and sisters, even those you do not know. ⁶ They told the church about your love. Please help them to continue their trip in a way worthy of God.

At that time teachers and preachers traveled from town-to-town teaching about Jesus. Like missionaries traveling around the country. There were no hotels, so people in the local churches would take care of them in their own homes. Gaius was faithful to welcome the traveling brothers and sisters – even if he didn't know them. That is true hospitality.

...**the church**... Greek = *ekklēsia* – an assembly. Can mean a local assembly of believers or the whole body of believers worldwide.

...**a way worthy of God**... with hospitality. By making sure they have the food and supplies they need for their journey. A way that will allow them to bring their message of encouragement and support to the churches by working together to serve the truth.

2 John 1:10-11 taught us that helping a false teacher makes us guilty of their sin. Here he teaches us that helping a true teacher is a good way of walking in love.

Matthew 25:40 Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.'

3 John 1:7-8 They started out in service to Christ, and they have been accepting nothing from nonbelievers. ⁸ So we should help such people; when we do, we share in their work for the truth.

When we help others in the ministry we share in their ministry.

Matthew 10:41-42 Whoever meets a prophet and accepts him will receive the reward of a prophet. And whoever accepts a good person because that person is good will receive the reward of a good person. ⁴² Those who give one of these little ones a cup of cold water because they are my followers will truly get their reward."

...**we should help such people**... do everything possible to help them.

...**we share in their work**... we are fellow workers/partners with the truth.

...**work for the truth**... the work of the Lord promoting the truth about Jesus.

3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be their leader, will not listen to us.

...**I wrote something to the church**... John had written a letter before this one. It was either lost or destroyed by Diotrephes.

...**the church**... in this verse it means the local assembly, not the world-wide church.

...**Diotrephes, who loves to be their leader**... pride. A dictator. We don't know if he was an official church leader or not. He certainly did not demonstrate love for others. He was only in love with himself. Many churches have someone like Diotrephes among them. That is sad!

Romans 12:3 Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to everyone among you. Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you.

...**will not listen to us**... Greek ➡ does not recognize our authority.

Matthew 10:40 Whoever accepts you also accepts me, and whoever accepts me also accepts the One who sent me.

3 John 1:10 So if I come, I will talk about what Diotrephes is doing, about how he lies and says evil things about us. But more than that, he refuses to accept the other brothers and sisters; he even stops those who do want to accept them and puts them out of the church.

Diotrephes was verbally attacking the apostle John. He was bringing false charges against the apostles with evil words.

He was also opposed to supporting true ministers.

He also stopped people who wanted to welcome true ministers and put them out of the church.

John was coming with the authority to act for Jesus.

For Christians, the important word is *truth*. Truth will show itself in love.

John was obviously an apostle of love. But Jesus called him a son of thunder (Mark 3:17). I imagine there was a gigantic thunderstorm when John met with Diotrephes!

It is too bad that so many churches are afraid to deal with their Diotrephes. He will destroy the church if he is not stopped.

3 John 1:11 My dear friend, do not follow what is bad; follow what is good. The one who does good belongs to God. But the one who does evil has never known God.

Our lifestyle is a direct reflection of how much we have known God.

When someone like Diotrephes starts telling lies about you, you might be tempted to lose your temper and make a public scene against them. Resist that temptation! Show God's love.

3 John 1:12 Everyone says good things about Demetrius, and the truth agrees with what they say. We also speak well of him, and you know what we say is true.

Demetrius has a good reputation. And his life demonstrates that he follows the teaching of scripture and follows Christ's commands. His actions match his doctrine.

Demetrius was not the yardstick that was used to measure the truth; the truth was the yardstick that was used to measure Demetrius.

Maybe Demetrius was a missionary. Maybe he was the person who carried this letter to Gaius.

This is not the same Demetrius from Acts 19:24-27. He was an evil man.

3 John 1:13-14 I have many things I want to write you, but I do not want to use pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon and talk face to face.

We can communicate better in person than we can through writing.

Some day we will be able to talk face to face with John!

3 John 1:15 Peace to you. The friends here greet you. Please greet each friend there by name.

...**Peace**... was a common way to end letters.

...**Please greet each friend**... the wonderful thing about serving Jesus is that you can meet other Christians for the first time and instantly be friends because you are both serving Jesus.

Some translations combine verses 14 and 15 – both together as verse 14. (Verse numbers were not part of the original New Testament. They were added around the year 1550).