

Walk in Light and Truth

2 John

Review

What did you learn last week that helps you be more confident that God hears and answers your prayers?

Intro

John used only 245 words to write this letter in the original Greek. It's the second shortest book in the Bible. (Third John has 219 words). At first glance, we might wonder why he took the time. But it's clear that he thought it was important to write it. Why? Because he believed the false teachers who were visiting a local house church were an immediate danger to the believers. He said he wanted to come visit so he could talk to them face to face. But right then, there were things he needed to say that just couldn't wait.

Day 1 2 John 1-3—Knowing and Loving the Truth

Say God's truth for the week: 2 John 6. Read the verse out loud. Then, read it to someone older than you—a parent, a grandparent, a teacher. Finally, read it to someone younger than you—a sibling, a neighbor, a niece or nephew. As you read the verse to these different people, what stood out to you? How does this verse apply to each audience similarly or differently?

John wanted his readers to have “grace, mercy, and peace” from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son. John was making a claim that Jesus is God. This is important, because he was warning his readers about false teachers who claimed that Jesus not the unique and only Son of God.



BEHIND the SCENES

We're not sure who the “lady” John wrote to was. She may have been an actual woman that John knew. Or he may have used the word lady to refer to a certain church.

1. There were no such things as email or group chats in John's day. In order for everyone to hear John's letter, the church had to gather in one place at one time. Draw what you think this may have looked like. How might this "inconvenience" have actually been helpful?



2. How many times does the word truth appear in these three verses?
3. Obviously, John wanted us to know how important truth is. Read the following verses and beside each of the references, write something you learn about truth.
 - a. John 1:17

 - b. John 8:32
4. John said that Christians should be people of truth—the truth “abides in us and will be with us forever.” What is true about people who do not know the truth or do not have it living in them?
 - a. Psalm 5:9

 - b. Romans 2:8

 - c. 1 John 2:4
5. In addition to what you learned in questions 2 and 3, why would you say that truth is so important?



LEARN the TRUTH!

What does it mean to “love in truth”? In order to love in truth, you must have a pure and sincere heart. You must not love others for selfish reasons. As you show love to people this week, consider your motives. Ask God to give you a love for others that is sincere and pure. Be ready to share your experience with your Core Group next week.

Day 2 2 John 4-6—Walking in Truth and Love

Unpack God’s truth for the week: 2 John 6. John said that his readers had heard this command “from the beginning.” What do you think that means?

John gave his readers a reliable way to know what true love looks like. He said that those who know and love God walk in His commandments. John explained that when Christians love God, they show it by doing what He wants them to do, particularly by loving others. False teachers made all sorts of claims about how their “truth” worked. But the way to tell for sure if others are really following God is to see if they are loving and truthful with others.

6. What does it mean to walk “in the truth”?

7. Why did John rejoice?

8. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20. How would you explain John’s reason for rejoicing?

9. Earlier, you looked at how obeying God leads to a better life. Now, think about how obeying God shows love to others.

A command of God	How obeying this command shows love

Day 3 2 John 7-9—Abiding in the Truth

Write God's truth for the week: 2 John 6. It seems like John repeated the same thoughts twice in this verse, just in the opposite order. Write out the verse, then see if you can write it in reverse without changing the meaning. When you're done, write the verse again. How close did you get?

John had written about the characteristics of deceivers and antichrists in his first letter (1 John 2:18, 2:22, and 4:3). But here he did it again. This repetition shows you how important it is for Christians to know about deceivers. John explained the difference between those who accepted and lived by Christ's teaching and those who continued to decide their own truth. Those who go their own way do not have God. But those who follow Christ's way have both God and Father and the Son.

10. How can you know if someone is a deceiver and not a person who really knows and loves Jesus? Put the answer in your own words.

11. Cross out any deceptions in the following statements. Then write how you would answer each deception with the truth.

Deception: You can trust Jesus to save you without believing everything the Bible says about Him.

Truth: _____

Deception: The Bible is a great book, and you ought to read it. Just don't take it too seriously.

Truth: _____

Deception: Live the way you want to. God won't care because He loves you no matter what.

Truth: _____

Deception: Jesus was a good teacher, and then He died. And that was the end.

Truth: _____

12. Some deceivers say that Jesus did not come to earth in the flesh. By that, they mean, He wasn't a real man. But the Bible gives us lots of assurance that Jesus was a real man. Match the following verses to the truth about Jesus's humanity found in each.

Luke 2:7

Jesus had a body.

Luke 24:39

Jesus got thirsty.

John 4:6

Jesus was born and wrapped up in a blanket.

John 19:28

Jesus got tired.

13. What did John say is true about someone who doesn't believe all that Jesus taught or who tries to add things that Jesus did not teach?

Day 4 2 John 10-11—Avoiding False Teachers

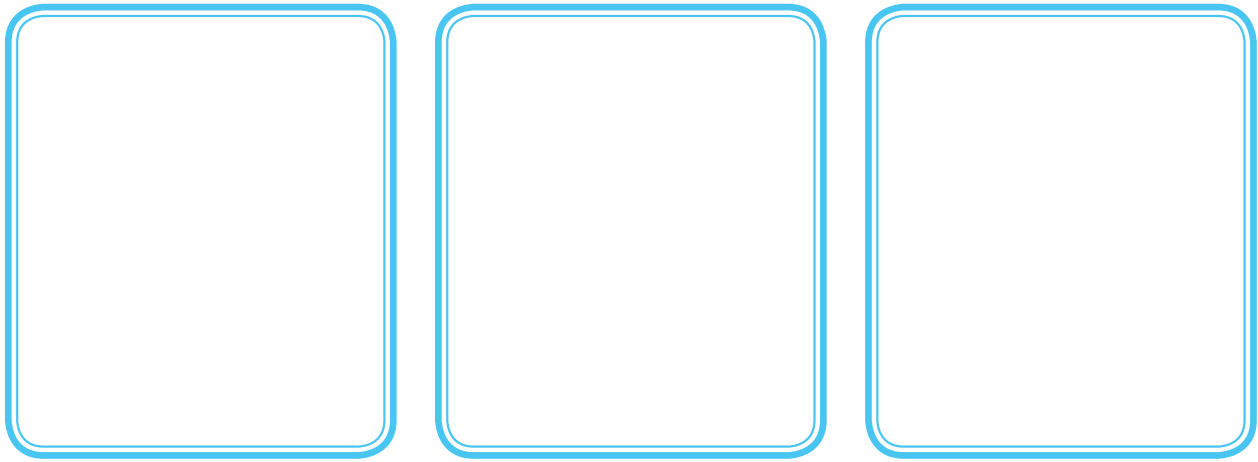
Exercise God's truth for the week: 2 John 6. John said that walking in God's commands shows your love for God and for others. Write down one way that you can love God and others in the next few days. Then do it before your Core Group meets.

John had a firm command for the lady and her children. When the false teachers came, she was not to allow them into her house or even greet them.

14. Why do you think John told "the elect lady" to treat false teachers who wanted to stay in her home this way?

15. John told his readers what not to do when the false teachers came, but what do you think he had in mind for her to do?

16. In John's day, shutting false teachers out meant actually shutting the front door on them. But what does it mean today to shut someone out? In the boxes below, draw or write three examples of ways to shut out false teachers in today's world.



Day 5 2 John 12-13—Final Greetings

Remember God's truth for the week: 2 John 6. Fill in the blanks to finish the verse. Half of the words have been left for you. When you're done, check your answers.

And ___ is ___, that we ___ to ___; ___ is the ___, just ___ have ___ from ___, so that ___ should ___ in it.

Have you ever struggled to decide the best way to send a message? Snapchat? Instagram? Text? Letter? Even in a world with no internet, John still struggled with decisions about the best way to communicate everything he had to say. But John knew that some things are best communicated face-to-face. So even though he had much more to say, he told the "elect lady" that he was going to wait so that they could talk in person. Then, they could take the time to enjoy their conversation instead of skimming through a long letter.

17. What are two important things John wrote about in this short letter? If you can't answer, reread the letter.

18. Why did John write such a short letter?

19. There are lots of different ways people communicate today. Circle any of the following that you use. Can you think of others?

20. Can you think of times when sharing face to face would be better than some of the ways you listed in Question 18? Explain.



APPLY the TRUTH!

We need to be wise about the people we associate with. Those who walk in truth and love will help us grow deeper in our own relationships with God. Those who do not will eventually drag us away. Think about the people who have the most influence in your life. Do they seek to love God and walk in His truth? This might be hard to hear, but if they do not, you need to find some new friends. You can—and should—still love those who don't know Jesus yet. But fellow believers should be your closest friends, the ones you spend the most time with, the ones who influence you most. Are there any changes you need to make? Plan to talk about this in your Core Group.

Notes & Doodles

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2 John

Just a few years ago, people thought all these statements were true. Now scientists say that none of them are.

“Don’t swallow gum. It will stay in your stomach for seven years.”

“Don’t go swimming for an hour after you eat. You’ll get cramps and drown.”

“Don’t crack your knuckles. You’ll get arthritis.”

We can be certain that future discoveries will prove a lot of things we think are true today are just as false.

Real truth lasts for eternity. John said that “the truth that abides in us ... will be with us forever” (2 John 2). God’s truth is permanent and absolute. People come up with their own “truths” to explain and better their lives. But those “truths” often fail. As we’ve just seen, even scientific “facts” change as researchers discover more information. God’s truth never changes. What was true when Jesus walked the earth is still true today and will continue to be true throughout eternity. Human truth will constantly fail, but we can count on God’s truth to make our lives worth living.

Greeting (2 John 1-3)

John began this short letter by calling himself “the elder.” The word elder was a title of authority in the church. John never used his own name, but from the very early days of the church, people have agreed that the letter was his.

John addressed his letter to “the elect lady and her children.” Some people think that the woman’s name was Eklektos (or something very

similar), which means “chosen” or “elect.” If that was the case, John may have been referring to her by name. He may have been writing to a woman and her own biological children, or to a woman and the people who were part of a church in her home. Some believe that John used the word lady to refer to a local church. Whatever the case, the apostles’ letters were passed around from person to person and place to place.

God's truth never changes. What was true when Jesus walked the earth is still true today and will continue to be true throughout eternity.

John began by writing about his love for the woman and her children—a love based “in truth.” He assured her that all who know the truth share this love “because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever.” By truth, John meant more than correct information. He was writing about the actual presence of Christ living in us. Jesus is Himself truth (see John 14:6). He lives in everyone who believes in Him.

Having Christ’s truth in us protects us against false ideas and teaching.



Think about ...

ways that you can accidentally spread false teaching. Have you ever liked a friend’s social media post because you

When John wrote about losing “what we have worked for” (2 John 1:8), he wasn’t talking about a believer’s salvation, since we can’t achieve our salvation by works.

thought it was funny, even if it treated sin casually or made fun of Christians? When other friends saw that you liked it, they probably thought you agreed with it. And if they knew you were a Christian, you were spreading false teaching about what Christians think—even if you would never do that on purpose. The Bible makes it clear that believers should avoid any type of evil. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23.) Instead, the Bible tells us to chase after things that help others know Jesus better. (See Romans 14:19.)



What would Jesus think about the things you “like” and share on social media?

Truth and Love (2 John 4-11)

John explained his reason for writing: to warn his readers that false teachers were traveling from place to place teaching dangerous messages. He had joy because “some” of the lady’s children were walking in the truth. But the word “some” seems to indicate that there were others who were not walking in the truth—and might have been following the false teachers.

John said that those who were walking in the truth were doing what the Father had

told them to do. He encouraged them to keep obeying the command that they had heard “from the beginning.” Unlike the false teachers, John was not claiming that his message was a new, secret mystery that he was telling just to get people to follow him. Instead, he wanted his readers to stick with the information they already knew—God’s original command to love one another.

After talking about those who walk in truth, John turned to the topic of those who weren’t walking in truth. John didn’t try to be nice about the false teachers. He called them deceivers and antichrists. He warned his readers against listening to them because falling for their lies would make them lose the “full reward” they had worked for. Christ has promised rewards to those who live in ways that please Him. But we can lose those rewards if we are disobedient, lazy, or focusing on the wrong things.

Think about ...

false teachers. John said, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world.” He referred to false teachers who were once thought to be believers. Satan knows that if he can confuse church leaders, he will also confuse those who listen to them. This teaching can fool anyone. It’s important that we respect leaders. But at the same time, we each have to take responsibility for making sure that what we hear doesn’t contradict what the Bible says (see 1 Timothy 4:16). And the only way to do that is to study the Bible and know what it says.

In John’s day, there weren’t 20 hotels at the entrance to every town like there are today. Travelers stayed in people’s homes. But to allow

a teacher to stay in your home would be a way of supporting his point of view and taking part in his wickedness. And if there was a church meeting in the lady's home, to invite known false teachers in would be the same as allowing them to preach. John did not want God's people to help the deceivers spread their false message in any way.

Conclusion (2 John 12-13)

John ended his letter by letting his readers know that he had more he wanted to say. He wanted to visit them himself and talk face to face. He knew that this would bring joy to him and them. It would have been obvious to his readers that John cared very deeply about them and their spiritual health.



Personalize the Truth!

Any one of us can be fooled from time to time. But the better we know God's truth, the easier it will be for us to recognize and defend ourselves from false teaching. How can you get more of God's Word into you? You need to read it regularly, and not only read it, but also think about what you read and think about how it applies to your daily life. Come up with a plan to read, study, memorize, and pray through a passage of Scripture. Write down your plan and try it for a week.

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