

Walk in Truth and Love: 2 John 1-6 Explained

Scriptures for Today:

2 John 1-6 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. 3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

Introduction

We are starting the book of 2 John, this is one of the shortest books in the Bible, but it's packed full of doctrinal truth that we can easily skip over if we don't slow down and study it carefully.

This book has just 1 chapter. 13 verses in total. It only takes a little over a minute and a half to read through the entire thing. That's why we must take our time and meditate on these things that have been written by John through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

This book is written by the Apostle John, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ. Not to be confused with John the Baptist.

John was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was very close to Jesus, so much so that Jesus entrusted John to take care of his mother, Mary at the time of His crucifixion. John 19

John wrote 5 books of the Bible.

The gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John , 3 John , Revelation

Think about this man who has seen it all. He saw God in human flesh with his own eyes. He saw unbelievable miracles. He walked through the mountains and valleys of life. He witnessed devastation, and trauma. He saw the Lamb of God, slain before him. He witnessed victory over death. He saw the Risen Savior. He suffered persecution and hardship.

And now late in his life, after decades of walking with God, he gets to pour out the wisdom that he's gained. Not the wisdom of this world. The wisdom that John is passing on comes directly from God himself.

That wisdom causes us to have a desire to seek truth. The apostle John cared very much about the truth. Just like you in your own life should care very much about the truth.

Everybody has their own idea of what truth is. One person might say, “this is my truth,” another might say, “that’s your truth,” and the world acts like truth is flexible—like it changes depending on feelings, experiences, or opinions.

But the Bible teaches something very different: **there is not many truths—there is one truth.**

For example: There are people who think they are their own gods. They make their own rules, they have their own moral code. They think that whatever they do is right.

Well, I hate to break it to you, but truth is not whatever you want it to be. Truth is what God says it is.

There can only be one truth.

You can say that the world came from an explosion billions of years ago, there is no God, and everything happened by chance, but that doesn’t make it true.

You can say that all life evolved from single-celled organisms and monkeys are our ancestors, but that doesn’t make it true.

You can say that humans are inherently good and that following your heart is a good practice, but that doesn’t make it true.

There is one absolute truth, and that is the Word of God.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy **word is truth.**

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a **God of truth** and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

God and His Word is the only truth that exists. Without Him there is no truth.

As John opens this 2nd letter that he wrote through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he reminds us how important truth is. The word “truth” is mentioned 5 times in the first 4 verses.

That’s why the title of this lesson is “Walk in Truth and Love”

Let’s look at these first 6 verses of 2 John and see what we can learn and apply to our lives.

Verse 1

2 John 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

Notice how John introduces himself as the elder. In the Bible an elder is more than just an older man. It can carry the idea of age, but it's also an office within the local church.

We see this in Paul's instructions in the book of Titus...

Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Elder, pastor, and bishop are interchangeable words for the same office of a spiritual leader of a local assembly of believers.

What is the job of an elder?

1 Peter 5:1-3 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **2** Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

An elder is to feed the flock— that is to preach and teach the word of God to the church.

1 Tim 5:17 describes elders who "Labour in the word and doctrine. " (Studying and working to understand scripture through the Holy Ghost)

Be examples. Protect from grievous wolves.

So when John refers to himself as, "the elder" he is writing as a spiritual leader, an overseer, a shepherd and protector of God's people.

2 John 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children...

So John refers to himself as the elder and he also tells us who this letter is addressed to...the elect lady and her children. We do not know exactly who this lady is. He does not give us a specific name. If God wanted us to know who this was then He would have named her.

What's important is that we know this lady was elect.

The word elect in all its forms is used 27 times in the King James Bible. Elect means "chosen" and is consistently used to describe God's people (believers in Jesus Christ) or Jesus Christ himself.

If you believe in Jesus for salvation, you are elect (chosen) of God through your faith in Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

The fact that this letter is unto the elect lady and her children, at a bare minimum, we know for sure that this is someone that has faith and is a believer in Jesus Christ.

2 John 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth;

This is someone that John cared for greatly. He loves her and her children in the truth. What does it mean to love someone in the truth?

Remember what truth is—There is one truth. God is truth. His Word is truth. Jesus Christ is truth.

So this love that John had for these individuals was not based on emotion, preference, or cultural ideas of love. The world's definition of love is not even close to God's definition of love.

People throw around the word love when they don't have a clue what it actually means.

When you say "I love you" do you have any idea what you are saying? You can't make up your own definition.

The world thinks that love is **total acceptance** of someone.

"If you love me, you'll affirm whatever I choose, no matter what."

The world thinks that love is **physical attraction** or infatuation.

"It was love at first sight..."

The world thinks that **physical intimacy** is love.

"If we're sleeping together, that proves we love each other."

None of those things are love. John was not making up his own idea of love. His love was not affirming wrongdoing, his love was not flattering, lying, or ignoring spiritual harm for the sake of peace. His love was in the truth, meaning it was rooted in Jesus Christ and in Scripture.

...unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

Not only was this elect lady and her children someone that John cared for and loved in the truth, but also all they that have known the truth. Which means she was known and loved by all in that area who had faith and believed in Jesus Christ. What was the reason for their love for her?

Verse 2 - 3

2 John 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

John is explaining why he and all believers loved her. It's not personality. It's not family ties. It's because of the truth. "For the truth's sake". The truth is the foundation of Christian fellowship.

Think about it, we would not be here gathered together if it wasn't for the truth. We can all fellowship together because we all have a common bond. That common bond is truth. And it's in you if you believe in Jesus Christ.

"For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us..."

Understand that there are many people that are gathered together in many churches all over the world, whose fellowship is not based on truth. If they do not have the true gospel their fellowship is based on lies, deception, greed, and other carnal things.

But our fellowship is based on truth, we love each other because we have the true gospel. We have Jesus.

For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

Now that we've found truth, how long do we have it for? It's never going away. The gospel is never going away. Eternal life is never going away. Jesus Christ is never going away. Truth will be with us forever. Praise God!

There might be times in your life when you have some trouble figuring out what is true and what is a lie. Remember that you have truth in you. Turn to the Word of God, the only source of truth, to find the answer. I promise God will show you.

2 John 3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

This is an awesome blessing that John is pronouncing towards this elect lady and her children.

Grace is given to us by God which is something that we do not deserve. (everlasting life is a gift)
Mercy is when God does not give us what we deserve (eternal punishment in hell)

And we gain eternal peace because of God's grace and mercy that He gives us.

Grace, mercy, and peace is not always referring to our eternal salvation. God shows us grace and mercy in our everyday life. He gives us things on earth that we don't deserve. (Family, Church, blessings) And He shows mercy to us on earth by withholding judgement. (He could rightfully take everything away)

How do we experience that grace, mercy, and peace in this life?...

"Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, **in truth and love.**"

As a believer, you are going to heaven, you have received God's ultimate act of grace and mercy. Nothing can change that.

But you still have your life to live. If you do not walk **in truth** in this life, you won't find grace in this life. If you do not walk **in love**, you will not find mercy in this life.

And if you don't have grace or mercy, you won't have any peace in this life.

John reminds us that grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, if we are in truth and love.

Verse 4

2 John 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Notice John says that he rejoiced greatly. He was filled with joy and happiness. And that tells you something: When a man has walked with God for decades, his greatest joy isn't found in money, comfort, or entertainment. His joy is seeing God's people walking in truth, obeying the word of God.

It brings me great joy, and I know it brings Josh, Gary, and many others great joy to see you walking in truth. It makes us very happy. We don't need other things.

Like the size of this church, how much offering is given, those things mean absolutely nothing when you are not walking in truth.

Walking in truth means that truth is not only in your mouth. It's also in your steps.

For example, if Josh and I came up here and spoke truth from God's word, and then we went out from here and consistently walked contrary to that truth. That would be very bad. We would be causing people to stumble, we would be causing others' faith to decrease. It would cause great sadness in many people if we chose to stop walking in truth.

Likewise for everyone here, if you choose not to walk in truth it will bring great sadness to many. Our decisions will affect everyone around us. Look at the last part of this verse...

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, **as we have received a commandment from the Father.**

So walking in truth is not optional. John says it's a **commandment from the Father**. God has commanded His people to live according to His truth. He wants us to walk in truth, to walk in obedience. Walking in truth does not restrict us, it does not hurt us. It brings blessings and happiness into your life.

John found the children of this elect lady to be walking in truth. That's a great testimony to have that points people to Jesus Christ. That's why we're here to glorify our Father in Heaven.

Imagine if some of you moved far away from here and many years go by. And eventually we had an opportunity to visit you. And when we visited you after many years, we saw that your children were grown and still walking in truth and serving God. We would rejoice. We would be filled with joy.

So truth is not meant to stand alone...

Verse 5

2 John 5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

John is beseeching, or asking urgently that she and her children follow this commandment, which is not a new commandment. They had it from the beginning, that we love one another. Where did this command come from? It came directly from Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The same way that Jesus loved us, remember he humbled himself, He became a man and took upon him the form of a servant. He gave his life for us. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

We are supposed to have the same sacrificial love that seeks to serve and esteem others above ourselves.

Remember the world has its own definition of love...
The world's love is total acceptance, no matter what.
The world's love does not judge. It's based on feelings.
The world thinks love is physical attraction and infatuation.
The world's love is tolerance without truth.
The world's love has no boundaries.

God did not leave it up to us to figure out what love actually means.

Verse 6

2 John 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

Understand that God's Word defines the actual definition of love. Love is walking after God's commandments. When we obey the commandments of God, we are walking in truth, we are doing what is right toward our neighbor, we are loving others. When we disobey the commandments, we are not acting in love, we are working harm instead of good. That is hate.

So when John says to love one another, he reminds us that love is walking after the commandments of God. The more we read God's word, and obey His commands, the more our love will abound for each other.

Next time you tell someone that you love them, make sure that's not just an empty statement. Make sure your life reflects truth and love. We are called to walk in both.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. **10** And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

Our love is supposed to increase more and more. That is my desire for this church that our love will increase.

Conclusion

As we close, understand this: **every believer will drift** if we don't stay anchored. And most drifting happens in one of two directions.

Some keep **love**—at least what the world calls love—and they throw away **truth**. They avoid correction. They affirm sin. They won't draw lines. They call compromise "compassion." But love without truth is not love—it's a lie that destroys.

Others keep **truth**—but throw away **love**. They're doctrinal, but they're cold. They can win an argument but they have no compassion. Truth without love is not truth lived out—it becomes pride.

John doesn't want us to choose one. We are called to walk in truth and in love. The same God who commands truth commands love. And the way we stay balanced is simple: **keep walking after His commandments**.

Remember this elect lady and her children. Remember the commands that God has given us through his word.

Let's walk in truth every single day. Where do you find truth? In the Word of God. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Walk in those things. Walk in love by keeping the commandments of God. Not by compromising in your life. You make righteous judgements. Don't love like the world. Don't accept sin to keep so-called peace with others. Remove yourself from evil. Love the brethren.

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a **pure heart fervently***:

Let's Pray