

Truth in Action Part I

(II John 1-13)

Introduction:

1. This letter has traditionally been accepted as written by the apostle John due to the similar style and content found in his first epistle (I John). There has been little credible dispute and no real reason to consider another author besides John.
2. There are two basic views as to who were the recipients of this letter:
 - Some contend that the use of the words “elect/chosen lady” are a reference to the church at large, and as such John is writing to a specific church body or group of churches (i.e. one or all of the seven churches of Asia).
 - Others contend that John is writing to a specific woman and her children and much like in his third letter. The content (though the same as found in I John) is written on a more personal basis and specific to this woman and her family.
3. In either case, whether John is writing to a smaller group of believers (a woman and her children) or a larger group (a church or churches); the content and conviction remain the same as what is found in I John.
 - Truth takes _____ and must be _____ against error (Jude 1-25)
 - Truth is _____ and it remains the cornerstone of our faith
4. The two basic themes of this letter can probably be summed up in these two passages:
 - “How happy I was to meet some of your children and find them living in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father” (II John 4 - NLT)
 - “Love means doing what God has commanded us” (II John 6 - NLT)

Living in Truth (II John 1-4)

1. One of the common bonds that unite all believers (Christ followers – Christians) is the _____.
- “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed in him; *If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you will know the **truth** and the **truth** will make you free*” (John 8:31-32)
- John writes of this common bond that unites all believers; “The elder to the chosen lady and her children, *whom I love **in the truth***, and not only I, but also ***all who know the truth***” (II John 1)
 - 1) The common bond that all Christ followers share is the belief in the gospel (the Good News – Jesus died and rose again); and trusting that it is _____.
 - 2) The “**love in the truth**” that John speaks of is based on the common faith in **Jesus Christ** that is found in this community of believers to whom he writes.
 - 3) The _____ for Christian love is motivated and founded upon the knowledge of the _____ which is Jesus Christ. (John 8:31-32, John 14:6)
 - 4) We must ensure that true truth is spoken – by _____ it and _____ it
- John further emphasizes the common bond we share in the Spirit; “***For the sake of the truth*** which abides in us and will be with us forever” (II Jn. 2)
 - 1) This just re-emphasizes what Jesus said; “I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it did not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17)
 - 2) This is also an interesting parallel to what John wrote in his first letter; “***but you have an anointing from the Holy One*** and you all know. ***I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it***, and because no lie is of the truth” (I John 2:20-21)

2. The result of living in truth are; fellowship with God and fellowship with other believers:

- “Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (II John 3)
 - 1) These terms (grace, mercy and peace); reveal the blessings of God bestowed upon those who trust Him and remain in fellowship with Him.
 - 2) Those who trust God also trust His Son, and John’s emphasis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God was intended to refute the continuous false claims of those who denied that truth.
- “I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father” (II John 4)
 - 1) This is a good reminder that the truth of God’s Word is to be lived as well as believed. (I John 2:3, James 1:22, Romans 2:13)
 - 2) The idea that is conveyed here is a “continual walking in truth” and intended to express that it is natural and normal for the community of believers to live out the truth in obedience to God. (I John 2:3-6, Romans 6:4, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10)

Loving in Truth (II John 5-11)

1. The command to love

- “Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another” (Vs. 5)
 - 1) This command to love is the same command that John has been declaring throughout his first letter. It is also the same command that Jesus taught the disciples and the same command proclaimed by the other writers of the New Testament.
 - 2) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35)
 - 3) The command to love is not unique to the New Testament as it has always been God’s plan that we love just as He loves. (Deuteronomy 6:5, Lev. 19:18)
 - 4) The Christ follower has a new understanding of love because the Holy Spirit indwells us. (Romans 5:1-5, I John 4:19, I Thessalonians 4:9)
- “And this is love that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it” (II John 6)
 - 1) The believer shows their love for God by their obedience to Him
 - 2) Those who genuinely love as God loves will walk in obedience to Biblical truth and those who walk in Biblical truth will genuinely love as God loves.
- “Truth and love are inseparably linked. Love is an integral part of obedience to the truth, being repeatedly commanded in Scripture; therefore those who do not love do not practice the truth” (**John MacArthur** *Commentary on I,II III John*; page 228)

2. The constraints of love (II John 7-11)

- “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward” (II John 7-8)
- 1) Just as in his first epistle; John warns that many false teachers were in their midst (I John 2:18, 4:1) and they were bent on deception (I John 2:26, 3:7) and attempting to lead others astray.
 - 2) The common error that could be found in all of the claims of the false teachers (antichrists); was in their unbelief in Jesus Christ, their flat denial of His incarnation (God in human flesh), and or making Jesus out to be either less than God or not fully human. This error allowed these false teachers to argue that even if Jesus died, his death served no purpose and certainly was incapable of atoning for the sin of mankind or anyone for that matter.
 - 3) The Christ follower is to “_____” the words of anyone claiming to teach truth so that they can discern whether what is being taught is genuine truth.
 - 4) Those who are committed to Biblical truth will see/discern the deception because they know and understand truth. It is natural then to stay away from, or not have fellowship with those who pervert the truth.
 - 5) The apostle John stresses that the deceivers/false teachers were in an all out attempt to subvert the cause of Christ and it is imperative that his readers would guard and protect the truth so that they and those that come after them would not lose ground to false teachers. There is too much at stake (both now and in the future) to give any ground to the enemy.
 - 6) John MacArthur says it this way; “Believers must be discerning and decisively reject deceiving false teachers, no matter how loudly they clamor for love and tolerance. Loyalty to the truth, written and incarnate, demands it, and the consequences of not doing so – both now and in eternity – are sufficient reason to be faithful” (**John MacArthur**, *Commentary on I, II, III John*; page 235)

- “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds” (II John 9-11)
- 1) The false teacher (the one who denies Jesus Christ or does not abide in His teaching) is generally not content to stay within the confines of Scripture and for very good reason; for if they did, they would be obedient to Jesus and obedient to what the Scriptures teach.
 - 2) Typically what happens is the false teacher will add; new revelation, their own interpretation to the Scripture, unsubstantiated visions and unsubstantiated claim to receive words from the Lord, extreme distortions and dismissal of Biblical texts. They will usually claim to have some sort of extra or advanced knowledge, new truth or hidden wisdom that only they are privileged to understand and convey to their followers.
 - 3) These types of false teachers (those who deny Christ) do not have God and John warns his readers that it is imperative to stay far away from their influences.
 - 4) As much as John has stressed the fact that we need to show love; at least here in this text he places some _____ on that love by telling his readers to avoid showing hospitality to travelling false teachers.
 - 5) The extreme interpretation of this text by some contends that John is advising that we not invite unbelievers into our home. Personally I think that is not John’s intent here. We should not turn away the ignorant but instead try to persuade them to embrace the truth in Christ. It is the willing and knowing false teacher that has no place in our midst and should be exposed, shunned, and unwelcomed.
 - 6) The warning is clear; avoid false teachers (those who deny that Jesus Christ is God) and don’t allow them to promote their heresy in your home. In doing this you will keep yourself from materially participating in their evil deeds.

Learning in Truth (II John 12-13)

1. What a fitting conclusion to a great letter; “Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full. The children of your chosen sister greet you” (II John 12-13)
 - It is John’s desire to come and speak face to face with the probable intention of sharing the passions of his heart which are to live and love in the truth.
 - The joy that John speaks of would have been a mutual joy and shared by both. Their joy was found in being firmly grounded in divine truth.
2. The final concluding statement of the letter reveals the personal relationships found within the community of believers which are wrapped in the life and love of God.