

## STUDY GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

### Summer Shorts

#### 2 John

Week 1: Week of August 24

“Love: The Ultimate Truth”

Text: Book of 2 John

#### **(For Facilitators mainly - optional for the group)**

#### Background

- The writer of this epistle is the apostle John. Many call him the apostle of love. The Lord Jesus called him a “son of thunder” (see Mark 3:17). I think you can add to the thunder a little lightning, for in his epistles he makes it pretty clear that you must exhibit love to others, or you are not a child of God. John wrote this epistle around A.D. 90–100.
- It is a personal letter. It is written by John to “the elect lady.” The question is often asked whether the Greek word electa is a title or whether it refers to a Christian lady in the early church by the name of Electa. Regardless of whether it is addressed to an individual or to a church, John is thinking of it in the context of the family of God. Apparently, there was some Christian lady or a local church which was extending hospitality to all those who claimed to be Christian, although some were scammers who denied the deity of Christ and the other great truths of the Christian faith. John warns here in this epistle against entertaining such people. This is actually the purpose of this little epistle.
- For John (and us), truth is worth contending for, and it is wrong to receive false teachers. The essential importance in John’s time is the deity of Christ and His work upon the Cross for us. The false prophets, most likely Gnostics, were refuting the divine nature of Jesus.
- John’s emphasis in his first epistle is upon love, but the key word in this second epistle is truth.
- John’s advice concerning false teachers gives us insight into what the early Christians faced. Traveling Christians stayed as guests in the homes of other Christians from city to city. Hospitality was an important ministry. Yet there were those who were masquerading as Christians and then taking advantage of their generosity. But the worst part was that these pseudo prophets then would spread a chaotic and false teaching. So, there is this delicate question of balance between openness and hospitality on one hand and on the other hand, wisdom to protect a family or church from the deceitful teaching.

## Discussion Questions

(Please use the questions that you feel are most appropriate to your group)

### Opening Questions (your choice)

Have you ever believed something to be true that you later found out wasn't actually true? An old wives' tale, maybe? Or a factoid that turned out to be false?

Whose home could you visit unexpectedly and know you would be welcomed?

How do you feel about having people in your home? What are some things you think about when you prepare for guests?

1. John begins his letter to a lady, and he calls her "chosen". Why would he use that term? What does this mean to you?
2. How are John's twin themes of truth and love interconnected?
3. Why do you suppose John mentions "truth" so many times in these verses? Why is truth so crucial to our lives?
4. How is love related to obedience? Why does this matter?
5. This is one of many, many mentions by John of the commandment to "love one another" as the very essence of the commandments. Why was this so foundational to the early church? Why is it so foundational to the gospel today?
6. What does it mean to "walk in love?"
7. What does it mean to "walk in truth?"
8. What's easier, to walk in truth or walk in love?
9. How would truth promote love? How does love promote truth?"
10. Have you ever experienced a disconnection with dear friends or family because of an issue involving your faith? How did that turn out?
11. Why do you suppose he writes of "walking in the truth" rather than of "speaking the truth"?
12. What kind of deceivers was John referring to? Are there deceivers today? What kinds of deceivers?
13. Some people have used this passage to say that Christians do not need to love non-Christians but that John is talking about "loving one another" is in reference to how Christians relate to one another. How do you respond to that?
14. What should you do with people who have minor doctrinal differences from you? What about major differences?
15. What might it mean to "lose...those things which we have worked for"? How do we ensure that was do not give up on our spiritual progress partway?
16. What edification is there in face to face communication?