

## 2 John

Sermon Preached by Phil Kayser at DCC on 2021-03-07

### Introduction - historical context

The only two books in the Bible to use the word “antichrist” are this book and 1 John. It doesn’t occur in Revelation. That word doesn’t occur anywhere else in the Bible. So that makes it exceedingly strange that Dispensational books almost totally ignore these two books when discussing the antichrist. And the reason is clear - in both of these books, the antichrist was present in the first century; it’s not future. Entire books have been written about “The *Coming* Antichrist,” but every one of them misses the fact that John clearly defined the emergence of the Antichrist spirit and antichrist humans as being a first century phenomenon.

I’ll just give you one example from each book. In 1 John 4:3 he says, “And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” This demonic spirit had already been unleashed upon Israel, and Israel became the chief persecutor of Christians, using their influence with Nero to do everything they could to undermine and wipe out Christianity. Three times in 1 John the apostle made it crystal clear that the antichrist spirit was already at work and that this is why they knew that it was the last hour for Israel (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3). Now, that doesn’t mean that demons can’t do the same kinds of things in other ages. They can. But that is not what is prophesied. It is in understanding *its first century context* that we have a philosophy that will sustain us when we see similar errors in other ages. And 1 John points out that the emergence of the antichrist was not proof that Israel would *win* - it was proof that it was Israel’s last hour (1 John 2:18). These were encouraging words.

Well, 2 John 7 also points to the present existence of these anti-Christ. It says, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” And literally it is, “even *the* Antichrist.” *The* Antichrist was there when this book was written.

And this is one of several evidences that 2 John was written within weeks or months of 1 John. This was written in either AD 65 or the first month or two of AD 66.

But 2 John doesn’t just deal with these heretics that had left the church and were undermining the church. It also deals with exactly the same three tests 1 John used to help the Christian discern the difference between false Christianity and genuine Christianity. The three tests are holiness, love, and true doctrine.<sup>1</sup> He hammered those three tests over

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<sup>1</sup> Aiken says, “> In these thirteen verses John repeatedly uses “truth” (five times), “love” (four times), “commandment” (four times), “walk” (three times), “teaching” (three times), and “children” (three times). He also utilizes a rare word, “antichrist,” which appears in Scripture only in 1 and 2 John (see 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).” Daniel L. Akin, 1, 2, 3

and over again in 1 John. And he hammers those three things home again in this epistle. According to John, the marks of the church are holiness, love, and pure doctrine.

## Proof that this book is written to model the relationship of elders to a single mom and her children

I won't take you through any more background research on the connections between these two epistles, but when you study those connections it raises a question. It is clear that this single lady and her children were members of one of the churches that 1 John had already been written to. So why does John feel the need to repeat himself to her when he knows for a fact that she has already heard 1 John being read when she was in church? Wasn't hearing that epistle read from the pulpit enough for her? And the answer is "No." Acts 2:46 sets the pattern of ministry for elders when it mentions the public preaching in the temple and then ministering "from house to house." Paul also modeled the same personal ministry in addition to his public preaching. In Acts 20:20 he said, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house..." Well, that's what John is doing right here. He is engaging in one-on-one ministry with the female head of a household. In 3 John he will model one-on-one ministry with the male head of a household.

But here's the problem. The heretics also understood the power of this kind of ministry. They completely bypassed the public ministry where they could easily be called out and they undercut the elders of churches by presuming upon people's hospitality and spreading their heresies one-on-one from house to house. Nowadays this is often done through Facebook, blogs, podcasts, email, radio, and other avenues into the home. 2 Timothy 3:6 speaks of heretics "who creep into households and make captives of gullible women." 2 John is helping one such gullible woman who didn't realize that she had been aiding and abetting heresy. She was doing it sincerely, but faithful shepherding involves helping families to recognize dangers and to avoid them. Jude 4 speaks of these heretics who have crept in unnoticed. 1 Timothy 5:13 speaks of those who went "from house to house" undermining the work of Timothy. Well, apparently this lady had been giving hospitality to heretics without realizing that they were heretics, and she thought that she was doing a good thing. John warns her that these teachers are deceivers and antichrists (verse 7), that if she continues to give hospitality to them she will lose her rewards in heaven (v. 8). Verses 10-11 say,

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

The point is that people don't always catch the significance and application of sermons such as 1 John was. And this is why there needs to be a one-on-one shepherding ministry. And

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John, vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 218.

this is why Scripture says that the ideal should be to have ten families per elder. Pray for us. We are way over that mark with Rodney being gone. OK - that's all by way of background of why this letter was needed for *this particular lady*.

But why did God include this personal letter<sup>2</sup> in the canon *for us*? If it's a personal letter, shouldn't it be kept personal? Why do we need it? There are a lot of scholars who have wondered why a personal letter would be canonized. To me it is pretty clear. This letter brilliantly instructs us on the ministries, jurisdictions, limits, and authority of all three governments.

Let me quickly outline the three governments. He starts by saying, "The elder to the elect lady and her children..." By calling himself "the elder" he is making clear that he has taken off his apostle's hat and is now wearing his elder's hat - at least in terms of modeling. Like Paul in Philemon and like the book of 3 John, John is here writing to a family in one of his churches, and his relationship to this family is not as this family's personal apostle, or friend, or advisor, or confidant. He could have written from a variety of capacities, but by God's inspiration, John writes in the capacity of a church elder, and he exercises eldership authority over her and over her family.

And here is why that is important: I cannot imitate John's authority as an apostle or as a prophet. He functioned as both, but both of those roles ceased to exist in the first century. I cannot write Scripture. However, I can imitate the things that John does which are specific to his office as elder. In this book he is a role model for us elders. And this book shows that the family should be under the authority of elders. In fact, the pattern established in 1 Peter 5:3, Zechariah 8:23, and other passages is that the families ought to be divided up under all the elders in a church so that each family has an elder - an elder who gets to know them, love them, and interact with them during the week. This book is not friendly to the concept of families worshipping alone and being out from under the shepherding oversight of elders. But it's not friendly to the mega-church concept either - where people get lost in the crowd. So church government is the first government addressed here.

The second government - that of the family, is addressed in the next phrase, "To the elect lady and her children." Now, I will admit that there have been two theories of who this elect

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<sup>2</sup> Most commentaries agree that this is a classic epistle in its structure and style. Not all agree. A minority see a chiastic structure. But even if this is true, epistles could have the main contents crafted as a chiasm. In his essay, "What is Truth," E. Wendland proposes the following chiastic structure. The same point I am bringing up would be reinforced by this chiasm, which has verse 8 as its central theme: A (1-3) salutation—the elect lady and her children B (4) thanksgiving—a cause for 'rejoicing' C (5-6) prescription—walk together in love and truth D (7) characterization—the 'deceivers' and 'antichrists' E (8) admonition—do not disobey the 'command' (i.e. love one another/confess the truth) so you don't lose the 'full reward' D' (9) characterization—those 'who do not abide in the teaching of/about Christ' C' (10-11) proscription—do not show love (fellowship) to those who deny the truth/'teaching' B' (12) wish—to effect an occasion for 'rejoicing' A' (13) salutation—'the children of our elect sister'

lady was.<sup>3</sup> One theory takes her as a metaphor for the church. And because of lack of time I won't get into all the reasons why I am 100% positive that that theory is false. But let me just give you two of those many reasons:

First, if this were the bride of Christ (as some people say), then who is her sister in verse 13? Some people backtrack at verse 13 and say that the sister was a local congregation. But you can't have it both ways. Each elect lady was either the bride as a whole or a local congregation, and nowhere else in Scripture is a local congregational called a bride. That would make Christ a polygamist – married to an elect lady here, and to a sister over there. Verse 13 is fatal to the view that the elect lady is a metaphor for the bride of Christ. And I don't have time to amplify on that this morning.

But let me give you the second reason: verse by verse there are many strong parallels between 2 John and 3 John. In fact, the two books are almost identical in their greetings, mannerisms, structure, style, and conclusion. And since everyone agrees that 3 John was written to a literal individual, the burden of proof is on those who would argue that 2 John is different. And I have not seen a single commentary that can meet that burden of proof. For example, John plans to visit this person and speak face to face with her in verse 12. Everyone agrees that the identical language in 3 John refers to a literal-face-to-face meeting with an individual. Likewise, just like Gaius in 3 John, the elect lady is said to own a house in verse 10 and to extend hospitality in that home. And I could give many other reasons.

Here's the bottom line - once you are convinced that John was writing to a single mom, this book comes alive. It is rich in instruction. Verses 2-6 indicate that it is not just fathers who must instruct their families in the word of God; mothers have a role as well. This book indicates that there are limits to a family's authority. For example, just because hospitality is under the authority of a family does not mean that a family has permission to extend hospitality to anyone that they please - for example, to heretics. The church can step in and say, "No. You can't do that." Verses 10-11 say,

2John 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Take that literally - do not invite Mormons or Jews into your home. God will judge you for encouraging them and helping them. And by the way, there will be a demonic presence in your home as long as those heretics are in your home. And the reason is that you have given the demons legal ground by inviting the heretics in. That Spirit of antichrist will try to influence your children and edge his permanent way into your home.

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<sup>3</sup> Those who believe this epistle was written to a church include Barker, 361; Boice, 161; Brooke, 167–70; Brown, 652; Bruce, 137–38; Burge, 233; Culpepper, 276; Culy, 141; Dodd, 144; Grayston, 152; Haas, de Jonge, and Swellengrebel, 158; Houlden, 142; Marshall, 60; Smalley, 318; Smith, 139; Stott, 204; Strecker, 220; Williams, 63; Yarbrough, 334. Those who believe it was written to an individual include Alexander, 283; Hodges, 251; Kistemaker, 208; MacArthur, 216; Moody, 119; Morris, 1271; Plummer, 57–58.

The bottom line is that John is not overstepping the church's jurisdiction in making that demand or implying that she will face the same church discipline that they faced if she ignores his admonition. This means that there are limits to that family's authority. So, one of the themes of this book is the limited jurisdictions of individuals, families, and churches. All three have very specific limited jurisdictions. And this book corrects the gross violations of jurisdiction that are constantly going on today. It's a much-needed book.

But this book also shows the power that a family integrated church can have in transforming a broken home like hers. Her home is not an ideal home. As we will see in a moment, not all of her children were walking in the truth, and we could hardly wish her single-mom-state on anyone. And yet this book illustrates every one of the NCFIC principles of the balance in jurisdictions between family and church. It shows a marvelous balance between self-government, family-government, and church-government.

## How this book corrects extremes

And in modern Christianity you see extremes that focus on only one of those governments to the exclusion of the others. Let me give a preliminary introduction to some of those extremes that our church has had to deal with.

### The problem of anarchism

Anarchism is the first extreme. It is sometimes known as radical individualism. And Murray Rothbard's writings have helped increase the number of these individualists or anarchists. It is so focused on the rights of the individual and of self-government that it severely undermines the jurisdictional authority of the family, church, and state. This book is a great corrective to that problem.

Anarchists reject authority, don't they? They don't mind getting advice, but anything with teeth in it is considered to be a violation of the right to self-government. But the word "elder" speaks of an office of authority that intersects with self-government. The kind of church discipline against heretics that John had exercised in verses 7-11 is an exercise of authority that anarchists bristle against.

But anarchists don't just bristle against church authority; they bristle against family authority too. Yet this woman clearly has authority within her jurisdiction, and John wants her to exercise it. She is not helpless as a single mom. John expects this woman to bring correction to her children who are not walking in the truth, and he calls her the "lady" of her home. That word "lady" is the feminine form for lord - κυρία. Since she doesn't have a husband, she is at this point the "lord" of that family; she is the authority over her children. And John does not overstep her family authority. Word by word and phrase by phrase you see this interesting interplay between two authorities. And obviously I won't be able to outline all of the ways that this book elevates this single woman and opposes abusive authority of the church. (I will probably deal with some of those principles in 3 John.)

But there was one more set of anarchists - her children. Why do I know that? Because in verses 4-6 John was saying that only *some* of her children were obeying the truth. The other

children knew better than mom; they knew better than elder John; and apparently they knew better than Scripture. But John was patiently bringing this family to leave anarchism behind as a deadly sin and to 1) rejoice in the authority of Scripture, 2) to rejoice in the mother's leadership of the family, and 3) to rejoice in John's leadership. And in a few minutes we will look at some of the things that need to be in place in the church for that kind of joy to be achieved. And this overview could set the stage for a verse by verse exposition of this book at some point in the future. But that's not my goal today.

### The problem of magisterial power (authoritarianism)

Let me quickly mention an extreme on the other end of the spectrum, and that is abusive shepherding that goes beyond the Scripture. Thankfully her church did not have that abusive shepherding, because John was her elder. But in 3 John, the apostle mentions another church that he had planted where the elder Diotrephes had become a paradigm of the abusive elder who goes beyond the Scripture. I know plenty of elders who are like Diotrephes, and it is no surprise to me that their churches keep everyone out of membership whose lives don't agree with them. Everyone is a clone of Diotrephes, or at least pretends to be.

I want you to notice that it is not John's own opinions that he is imposing on this woman. The only authority that he exercises is the authority of Scripture – what he calls “the truth” and “the commandments” of God and “the doctrine of Christ.” Because he was an apostle, he did bring Scripture and he did have magisterial power.<sup>4</sup> He was the direct mouthpiece of

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<sup>4</sup> Magisterial power means authority which is 1) supreme or legislative (in other words creating the rules), 2) or it is an authority from which there is no right of appeal and/or 3) carries with it the weight of force. In contrast, ministerial power means a subordinate, limited, delegated power that seeks to declare God's judgments by appeal to God's revelation. When the term magisterial and ministerial is applied to reason, magisterial refers to reason as the final arbiter and ministerial refers to reason being dependent upon divine revelation. For example, Jonathan Sarfati gives the following definitions: “The magisterial use of reason occurs when reason stands over Scripture like a magistrate and judges it. Such ‘reasoning’ is bound to be flawed, because it starts with axioms invented by fallible humans and not revealed by the infallible God.... The ministerial use of reason occurs when reason submits to Scripture. This means that all things necessary for our faith and life are either expressly set down in Scripture or may be deduced by good and necessary consequence from Scripture.” <http://creation.com/loving-god-with-all-your-mind-logic-and-creation>. That John was modeling an elder's use of ministerial power can be seen from the following points: 1. Though he is inspired and does not need to appeal to Scripture for his admonitions to be authoritative, he still appeals to Scripture as any other elder would (vv. 1,2,4,5,6,9,10) 2. Though she has shown parental failures, John does not take over her parental responsibilities or powers; nor does he imply that the church should. If John does not do so, how much less so should modern church government? Instead, John seeks to persuade from Scripture as to her responsibilities. (vv. 4-6,9). 3. He

God. But I find it interesting that since he is modeling eldership, he does not use his magisterial power of an apostle by giving a new commandment. In fact, he explicitly says the opposite in verse 5: “And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.” By pleading, he is exercising ministerial power, not magisterial power. By appealing to *Scripture* he is exercising the same ministerial power that we do. By exercising church discipline in verses 7-8 he was exercising the ministerial power that the Scripture gives to every elder, not magisterial power. By warning her that she needs to honor that discipline, he is simply applying the authority of Scripture in the church.

I bring this up because too many elders are trying to exercise magisterial power that goes beyond the Scripture. They don't think they are because they are not part of the Roman Catholic Church. But if we impose any laws that go beyond the Scripture, automatically we are claiming a kind of magisterial power and are no better than the Roman Catholics. In fact, I would say that most churches are doing this when they use psychology in their counseling, or when they demand that their widows get on welfare and apply for food stamps, or when they reject the regulative principle of worship, or when they apply the findings of sociology to justify women elders, and in a host of other areas. It is really the wisdom of man being substituted for the Word of God. We can't do that. Now that prophets and apostles have passed away, all that is left for the church to exercise is the ministerial power of applying the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. That's why Paul told the Corinthians not to go beyond what is written. As one old Puritan worded it, “The only voice that should be heard in the church is the voice of Christ *speaking through the Scriptures*.” The Westminster Confession says that we cannot demand implicit faith like the Roman Catholics do.

### The problem of hyper-patriarchy

Let's look at a third extreme. If we are to have the kind of transformational church that John had, and if we are to succeed in integrating single moms into the church, we must avoid hyper-patriarchy. Now, I'm a patriarchalist, because the Bible is. But hyper-patriarchy goes *beyond* (the Greek word ὑπὲρ is beyond - it goes beyond) the Scriptures and takes away liberties that the Scriptures clearly gives.

I'll give you some examples. I know a pastor who acts as if he is the main authority in homes that have a single mom. The elder John doesn't do that. He acknowledges her authority, not just by calling her the *lady* of the home, but by expecting *her* to discipline her children, to instruct her children, and holds *her* accountable for her children's actions in the same way that an elder would ordinarily do with a father. John doesn't discipline the children for her. Nor does John call the children “our children.” In verse 1 he calls them “her children” and in verse 4 when addressing her he calls them “your children.” He is her *elder*, not her husband. (There are some hyper-patriarchalists who say elders should function as

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pleads with the lady (v. 5). 4. The repercussion of failing to honor church discipline (vv. 7-9) is declaratory in nature (vv. 10-11).



surrogate husbands for widows. No. Absolutely not.) And there are many other indicators throughout the book that her family is intact and she is the authority and head over that family even though she doesn't currently have a husband. Now the Bible does mention that there is a place for relatives to bring a woman who cannot support herself back under the authority of a father or other male relative, but it is not a mandate, and even when it is necessary, it is important that such an action not dissolve the family or dissolve the mother's authority over her family. Yes, she will have to abide by the rules of the house she is now living in, but if those rules dissolve her family, she should leave.

## The problem of church-centrism

Let me give you a fourth extreme. There are churches that have overreacted to the extremes of anarchism and hyper-patriarchy and have made the church the primary authority in all of life. It's a church-centric view of life. This extreme believes in big government with all kinds of programs for every need. And it is ironic – the very churches that badmouth big government when it comes to civics have bloated ministries that the Bible has never authorized. They have big church government. They reject civil-socialism but they engage in church-socialism. They engage the church in ministries that 1 Timothy 5 explicitly gives to family and that the same chapter forbids the church from taking on unless there is no family.

Most of the ministries in our church are simply families ministering to other families. People wonder why we don't have all the programs they are used to - it is because we are not authorized by the Bible to have those programs. We aren't program-driven. We get behind families in their ministries. Some people have a hard time wrapping their brains around that and think that our church doesn't do much because we don't have programs. On the contrary, we equip the *saints* for the work of the ministry and there are a ton of ministries being done by the saints of this church. A program driven church can (if they are not careful) make broken families just as dependent upon the church as they had been upon the state. It does not strengthen those families. Our approach to church government forces families to grow up quickly and to make the most of being a family. Church centrism is not the answer to family-centrism.

And this is especially true when it comes to authority. It just boggles my mind, but one elder wrote to a child in his church a letter that contained this statement (this is a direct quote): "The church... has more authority over you than your father... the father's authority is derived from the church, seeing as he is under the authority of the elders." That's bizarre. The father does not derive his authority over his children from the church. That is a blurring of the jurisdictions of family and church that this book so clearly lays out. I actually heard of one pastor who said that when a family walks through the doors of his church they cease to be a family and the church relates to each one individually *unmediated by the family*. And by the way, this centralism of the church even happens in churches that are democratic and let everyone vote. Radical individualism can lead to authoritarianism. For example, universal suffrage evaporates the family, as R. L. Dabney pointed out. The church is a republic of families. It is not a democracy of individuals.



I was shocked when a Baptist pastor regularly spanked other people's children in church. His argument was that when they were members of the church, he had authority to spank. Well, When the kids acted up in John's church, who did elder John go to? He went to the mom. He respected her authority over that family even though it was a broken family. And we elders and deacons have had to approach you parents to ask you to discipline naughty children from time to time. Don't take that as an insult. Take that as an honoring of your jurisdiction. We are honoring your turf and telling you to take charge of it.

## The problem of ignoring church authority

The last extreme is ignoring church authority. And it can be manifested in two ways. The first way is to call all legitimate exercises of church authority as "abusive" and "authoritarian." Those terms are thrown around way too loosely. The other way this problem can be manifested is when elders fear the label of authoritarian so much that they fail to exercise the church authority that they have. When Elder John respected the authority of this woman's family, he did not take a total hands-off approach to the problems that existed in her family. A church will not experience transformation of broken families if it does so.

I want you to notice that John addresses her directly in verses 1,4 and 5. He says, "I rejoiced that I found some of your children walking in the truth" etc. But he also addressed her children directly in verses 1,6,8,10 and 12. Verse 1 indicates that this letter is addressed to the elect lady *and to her children*. He wants the letter to be read to her children. In three verses the plural "you" is used to address everyone in the family. For example, in verse 12 he says, "Having many things to write to you [plural - to y'all], I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you [plural - to y'all] and speak face to face, that our joy may be full."

So he is planning to talk to all of them. That is appropriate. That does not overstep family jurisdiction, since the head of the household knows exactly what the elder has said. He or she is there. On the other hand, having the church age-segregated and secretly teaching the children things that the parent has no clue about would overstep the parent's jurisdiction, but this does not. The word of God must be applied to everyone from the pulpit. And when you see a child acting dangerously or rebelliously outside the sight of his parents, it is perfectly appropriate to say "No" to the child, and if need be to take the child to the parent and explain the situation and use it as a teaching moment. I would never discipline the child, but I have no problem rebuking a child who is being disrespectful to property and/or taking a child to a parent for discipline.

Love does indeed cover over a multitude of sins (and we emphasize that fact in our church), but the elders have on two occasions had to tell visiting parents that they are no longer welcome to continue visiting our church because the parents have repeatedly refused to discipline their children even when their children were destroying property, kicking, and biting. On one occasion the parent said that they didn't believe in discipline and told us that it is none of our business to bring Scriptures saying that they must discipline. However, there is nothing that says that everyone who wants to attend your fellowship has to be allowed to attend. Elders must exercise their church authority. That's

imitating John. And when the balance of jurisdictions that 2 John exemplifies is consistently lived out, you have a much greater chance of seeing success.

Now obviously there is a lot more that could be said about jurisdictions, but hopefully I have said enough that you can see that this is a beautiful book for articulating the kind of balance that is seen in the NCFIC foundational principles. Sadly the NCFIC organization changed their name, but I like the old name. I believe family integrated churches are in the perfect position to integrate and transform broken families. In fact, we are in a far better place than non-integrated churches are. And I believe the principles of this book (most of which we can't get into) are absolutely imperative for fulfilling the Great Commission.

## **Practical issues that must be in place if we are to integrate broken families successfully**

### **Don't try to avoid messed up families**

Having dealt with the jurisdictional issues, let's move on to at least outline a few of the practical issues that most of our churches face day in and day out. The first should be pretty obvious: don't avoid messed up families if they are willing to submit to church authority. That's hard when you value the sweet fellowship of your current group and you are all on the same page, and none of you have bad habits, and your kids are well behaved. And then you get a family like this lady's, half of whose kids are not obeying the truth, and it's not as much fun. And I admit it. And that's why it is so critical that we take all these principles into account and we get this family up to speed fairly quickly.

We have already dealt with the fact that she is a single mom. We are not told why she is single. It may be that her husband died, or it might have been a divorce. 1 Corinthians 7 implies that there were pagans who left their wives when the wife became a Christian. Even in the apostle's day, messy divorces happened. If they are bad divorces, it will preclude them being officers, but it need not preclude them from being members, or being involved in ministry. When parents with undisciplined children visit, they immediately know that their kids are different from our kids, and they are already motivated to change. So it is fairly easy to instruct them, to pair them up with a mentoring family, and encourage them and pray for them as they grow through the troubles. But it requires TLC (tender loving care) and patience from the body.

### **Value the truth more than comfort**

Second, value the truth more than comfort. John says, "To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever." John loved her and the church as a whole loved her because they valued truth more than comfort; they valued truth more than having a church that looks perfect; they valued truth more than putting up a façade of having everything put together. Our church strives hard to maintain a safe environment where we can be open and honest about our struggles and our failings and even our

differences of opinion. I've had to tell people from time to time to chill and not feel like they have to convince wrong people of all of their errors. The Holy Spirit has a lot more power to do that than we do, and that trust of the Holy Spirit allows us to have a much stronger free market of ideas. There are limits obviously when heresy is spouted, but I like a free market of ideas. When you have facades, you don't tend to welcome people who don't fit the stereotype. John's church welcomed this broken family; they loved on them, and they did so in truth.

Of course, they expected the new family to value the truth and to grow in the truth as well. So its not as if they keep quiet about issues. There are some people who come into churches simply to suck the church dry and then when their welcome is worn out, they go off to suck another church dry. We've had our share of those in each of the churches I have helped to pastor. Those kinds of parasites would not last long in John's church. John is not modeling a flabby love, but a tough love that is defined by the truth of Scripture. And when you define love, when you show that you want what is in the family's best interests, and not just what they want, then the church won't be burned out by users. They'll be exercising a tough love that moves families to maturity. But we all must value truth more than comfort.

### Value people more than programs

Third, value people more than programs. This is a balance of the previous point. John said that their whole church valued her family. And let me assure you that a family struggling with children can tell right off the bat whether they are being valued or simply tolerated; or actually, sometimes not tolerated. They can tell. How do you love such a family in the truth? The same way that we obey the Sermon on the Mount when it calls us to love those who are *outside* the church. It requires God's supernatural grace to love the unlovable, and we must not settle for a kind of Christianity that any tare can live. When you walk in the Spirit you will value people more than programs.

### Communicate (2 John)

The fourth thing that must be shored up in our churches is communication. And this is not just communication on Sunday, but communication during the week like happened here. Too many churches are shy about communicating with broken families on the good progress that has been made and reminding them of the things that still need to be shored up. In this letter John communicates about holiness in verse 4, the need for her children to be more loving in verse 5, and defining what that means in verse 6, and warning her about heretics in verses 7-9, and telling her that she needs to stop extending hospitality to such people in verses 10-11. And in verse 12 he indicates that he has a lot more things that he wants to talk to her and the kids about. Now he does it in a very upbeat way, and we will look at that in a bit, but he communicates tough things. Without such communication, how will families grow past their hurt and brokenness quickly? We cannot be shy in our communication.

And these verses speak of two ways of communicating – face-to-face and written. Some of our family integrated churches have people driving from up to two and a half hours away, so visiting during the week is often not possible. But that doesn't mean there can't be good

communication. Obviously some communication can happen on Sundays. But our Discord channels have been fantastic vehicles for communicating and sharing. I never thought I would love Discord as much as I do. I wish there was a bit more of a secure app that does the same thing, but hey - there is a communication.

Obviously verse 12 indicates that he was planning to visit her home. Home visits are important. But if home visits are the only shepherding oversight that we give, our people will be short-changed. John wrote letters. Using emails to pastor and to shepherd is not without precedent. The busier an elder becomes, the more he has to think outside the box in how to maintain contact with needy people. Jay Adams says that you can't get more efficient than using the phone and email. This speeds up the sanctification process and the integration process. I do a ton of emails with our church members every week. And so do Gary and Rodney. So don't be shy about approaching your assigned elder on email.

But it's not just an *elder's* communication. We try to encourage all of our people to be (as Romans words it) able to exhort and to encourage. The more healthy the communication of the whole body is, the more able they will be to quickly bring a new broken family up to speed.

### Love in truth and affirm this love (v. 1)

Fifth, we should make sure that love in the truth is present and constantly being affirmed. He affirmed that love in verses 1, 5, and 6, showed that love by taking the time to write the letter, and by knowing the state of her family and showing interest in the family. He showed love by expressing the concern that he had about the influence of heresies upon this woman's mind in verses 7-9. So there was a lot of love being shown. If a church does not overflow with love, the needed correctives in new families will not be received as well.

And there are many other ways of affirming this love. We are a hugging church, right? Some of you ought to hug more. But I have heard that one of the things that newcomers are blown away by is how obvious it is that people love hanging out together, working together, talking together, and doing projects together. It's obvious that we love each other. We don't leave five minutes after the church service is done. Love is essential if we are to turn families right-side up like happened out in Ethiopia when I was growing up.

### Maintain a positive and optimistic atmosphere (vv. 3-4)

The sixth thing that must be present is a positive and affirming atmosphere. This is so critical, and I think that Paul was a genius at this. Even the Pauline letters that were giving a congregation a royal chewing out were so filled with positive comments, praise, and encouragement, that it made the rebukes easier to swallow.

But I think John displays that here as well. Let's read verse 3 because it gives the foundation for this, though you see it throughout the book. "Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." Notice that he said, they "will be with you." That's an affirmation. If you are a Christian, these things will be with you. She is no doubt overwhelmed and discouraged with the lack of holiness in her children that verse 4 implies and the lack of love among

them that verse 5 implies. But he casts hope with six essentials. Let me quickly list six things I see in this book that maintain a positive and optimistic atmosphere. And they are all illustrated in this verse.

### Experiencing and living God's grace (v. 3)

The first essential for developing a positive atmosphere in a church is that it be grace-focused and grace-saturated. John says, "grace will be with you." The margin of the NKJV says that both the NU and the Majority Text have the word "us." And if that is correct (which of course it is), then what John is saying is that we are all in the same boat – we are all sinners in need of grace, mercy and peace. That's encouraging – the woman realizes that she is not the only one that's got problems. But either way, John promises grace. We must constantly give hope to broken families. People can't fall so far that God's grace can't reach them and solve their problems.

### Experiencing and living God's mercy (v. 3)

The second word in verse 3 that develops a positive atmosphere is "mercy." John is guaranteeing that God's mercy will flow in their lives, implying what? It implies that there will always be a need for God's mercy. We are all sinners growing together, aren't we? We should try to get new families not to be discouraged. We should be cheerleaders for God's mercy just like John was. Lamentations says that if it were not for God's mercies we would all have been consumed long ago. Do you really believe that you are that much a sinner? If you do, you will flow with mercy to others. The more we realize how much each one of us needs God's mercy, the more we will be open to showing mercy to other saints who sin, and the less judgmental we will be. The church is not designed to be a holy huddle of people excluding sinners.

### Experiencing and living God's peace (v. 3)

God's peace is the third word, and it is also critical to a healthy atmosphere in a church. The dictionary defines peace as:

To be complete or sound.... The general meaning behind the root sh-l-m is of completion and fulfillment – of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship.

So John is cheer-leading that they can be made whole. Subjective peace, objective peace, and the restoration of what was lost in Adam. And that's what these broken families long for, isn't it? Peace, wholeness, restoration. The moment they walk through the doors of our fellowship they should feel like they are coming into a sanctuary and out of the battlefield. May it be so Lord Jesus.

### Doing so in truth and love (v. 3)

But all of this needs to be given definition by the bookends of love and truth. Otherwise you have a false peace that excuses sin. Verse 3 says, "Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, *in truth and love.*" Everything discussed in that book is conditioned by truth and love. People think they

are being gracious when they excuse sin. That's not being gracious at all - that's the opposite of grace. They think they are being merciful when they become enablers of ungodly behavior. But that is neither mercy nor grace and it certainly doesn't lead to peace. It may lead to a false peace occasionally, (or what Ken Sande speaks of as faking peace) but it doesn't lead to true peace. The truth of God's word needs to define grace and mercy. And in the so-called "gracist churches" it doesn't. True grace enables us to grow in holiness; true mercy forgives our sins and gives us another chance to strive for holiness. It never enables.

Love is the other bookend, which we have already dealt with adequately. Not a sentimental love that allows people to rush headlong into destruction, but a truthful love that seeks the other person's best welfare even when that might hurt.

### Encouraging people to keep looking up (v. 3)

But John is not telling them to be optimistic by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. No. He is telling them to look up: These things come "from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father." We teach broken people to look to God, not to us. The church is not their answer, God is. When people come for counseling, I make sure that they are not looking to me to be their savior. The moment they see us as the experts who can answer all their problems we are adding stress to ourselves and robbing them of grace. Even when talking about simple practical things like when kids are wiggly and noisy, we tell them, "Here are the steps that God used to help me to get a handle on things." We direct their attention to God.

### Acknowledging accomplishments (v. 4)

Another way in which a positive and affirming environment is maintained is by acknowledging accomplishments that these families have made. There may be problems, but don't just focus on the negative. Verse 4 says, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in the truth..." And again, because of lack of time, I am going to have to skip the amplification of that. But it is important for us to focus more on the progress of God's grace in these broken families than to focus on the many things yet to be done. We've got to be encouraging to these struggling believers like John was.

### Showing patience with gradual growth (vv. 5-6)

And one other thing that develops a positive atmosphere is patience. We see this illustrated in verses 5-6. Some people misinterpret patience as ignoring issues that need to be dealt with. But the last half of verse 4 says, "as we received commandment from the Father." John continues to hold the standard out in front of them at the same time that he is being encouraging. Some people act as if patience ignores the standard. No - patience implies that you are persevering in moving people toward maturity, but recognizing that it may take a lot of time. You've seen the signs, "Be Patient, God is Not Finish With Me Yet"? Some people use that as an excuse for not moving. But if you don't hold out the standard, you will discourage the already existing members who have to put up with the broken families. When both are held together, everyone is encouraged. So John gives a goal, gives hope that



the goal can be achieved, acknowledges the progress that has been made, and encourages her by affirming his love. What a neat balance! I love this book!

### Saturate the church in Scripture (vv. 5-11)

But let's move on to the seventh thing that needs to be in place – it is imperative that we saturate the church in Scripture. Depending on how you count it, there are at least thirteen times that John brings this woman's attention back to the Scripture. And of course, this is Scripture that he is writing - so its even more.

In our church we have Scriptural promises, Scriptural readings of the law, we sing Scripture, have Scripture prayers, Scriptural affirmations of the Gospel, and two sermons. And you will find Scripture being talked about in personal conversations during the fellowship hour - at least that should be the case. You have to cultivate that, but when Scripture is the foundation for everything we say, there is power. Your testimony is not sharper than any two-edged sword – Scripture is. So a testimony has no power to transform broken families without Scripture. It's astonishing to me how much counseling happens with broken families in some churches without any reference to Scripture. Scripture must be the atmosphere that a church breathes if it is to be a transformational church.

### Exercise church discipline (v. 7)

Eighth, see church discipline as an incredible blessing. The Scripture ties church discipline to the growth of the body. And when most evangelical churches do not exercise loving discipline, it is no wonder that they are not transformational. Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:

2Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, [and I want you to notice that the sentence is not yet finished – we cannot take it out of context -] 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

What's the context of that incredible passage on spiritual warfare? It's church discipline. One of the reasons that the churches were so transformed in the tribes I grew up with in Ethiopia is that they took church discipline seriously. The keys of the kingdom admit people to communion and membership, and the keys close the door to people who will not submit. Verse 7 says, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world" [implying that they were at one time in the church. But they have gone out into the world] "who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." So excommunication of heretics is one form of discipline. It is designed to restore them to repentance if possible, but even if that doesn't happen, it has a second goal of purifying the church.

But another form of discipline is simply warning. Verse 8 says, "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward." A lot of



people think of discipline as being only the final stage. But by far the greatest part of discipline is the discipline of the word. The Reformers spoke of preaching as sitting under the discipline of the word. God's Word brings correction, and we exercise self-discipline when we obey it. It is only when 0% self-discipline is in evidence that the church eventually concludes that there is no grace present, and the last stage of excommunication is achieved. But usually, just hearing from the Word what is wrong is all the discipline that most people need. They self-correct with self-discipline.

Unfortunately, too many elders lack the courage to bring the kind of loving discipline that verse 8 brings – warnings. Occasionally someone will need a rebuke. Occasionally someone might need a brother or sister going privately and seeking to reason with a person. But in most cases, because our whole church believes in Matthew 18, we elders don't even hear about the problem. Praise God! It gets dealt with one-on-one or maybe with two or three. And that frees up the time of the elders. Matthew 18 is part of God's design of turning families right-side up by His grace. They are marks of love and care – at least they should be. I know church discipline can be and has been abused. So can the rod within the family. But Hebrews 12 says that when there is no discipline in a family there is no love. And in the same way, when there is no discipline in the church, there is no love. It's no wonder most churches don't transform broken families. They don't love them enough to discipline them.

## **Antithesis – be willing to have a negative ministry of confrontation (v. 9)**

Ninth is a word that Postmodernism hates – antithesis – being willing not just to say “This is good,” but to also say, “That is bad.” Postmodernism is willing for you to affirm anything, so long as you don't say anything negative or so long as you don't call something heresy. But it was because John cared so much that he warned this lady of the dangers of heresy in verse 9.

2John 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

People think that warning about the bad things that are happening in Protestantism is a negative ministry. But as Francis Schaeffer has said, you aren't truly preaching the truth until you are willing to reject the error. That's antithesis. That's why we have warning labels on medicines. It's not enough to know what it is good for. It's also important to know the dangers of metaphorically swallowing a bottle of error pills. Why were the families in our Ethiopian churches growing so incredibly? It wasn't simply because we told them what was good for them. It was also because we warned them of the dangers of their old lifestyle, their old methods of disciplining children, their old methods of finances, their failure to honor their wives (in fact, some of them regularly beat their wives, and that could not be tolerated), their old views on sexuality, present-orientedness, and demonic cultural paradigms. Many churches refuse to do that because they want to maintain “a positive ministry.” They don't want to warn of the destruction being brought into the church through feminism, socialism, evolutionism, and other errors. You will never have the kind of transformational ministry that John had without antithesis. Will you be criticized on the

web for doing so? Yes you will. But you will please God and actually help people rather than making them comfortable in their sins.

### **Fellowship & joy (v. 12-13)**

Tenth is joy. If a church does not overflow with joy and laughter, people will eventually get discouraged and leave. I sometimes say that John Piper played a one-stringed violin, but he played it exceedingly well. Verse 12 says,

Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

When face-to-face relationships within the church produce full joy, you know that you've got something. You've got a church that will be a magnet for those who long to have what we have. And this whole book radiates joy. Nehemiah says, "the joy of the Lord is your strength." It is spiritual joy that takes our people through pretty rough waters.

### **Minister to the children (v. 4)**

Eleventh, verse 4 hints that we should not ignore the children in our preaching. References to our children occur over 1300 times in the Bible. God has an interest in our children, and we should too. And that interest is not best expressed by age segregated youth programs. It is best expressed by valuing kids in our adult activities and valuing adults in our youth oriented activities. When adults are fun to be around and children are fun to be around, you've got a church that will be a magnet. John ministered to the children in a family-integrated way. And by the way, a big thank you to you children who would converse with my mom when she was here. It was a big blessing.

### **Take parenting seriously (vv. 4-6)**

Twelfth, we should help the members of our churches to take parenting seriously. There is nothing worse than having little kids terrorizing a house and the parents being oblivious to it and everyone else pretending hard that it isn't happening. So John encourages parenting in verse 4, pleads for better parenting in verse 5 and instructs from the Word that parents must parent. And if you are one of the parents who needs help in parenting, talk to deacon Brian Fox to start his parenting class. He can't start a class if he doesn't have any parents interested in the class.

### **Training: Our homes should be trained in orthodox doctrine (vv. 7-10)**

The thirteenth characteristic may seem puzzling – grounding families in good doctrine. Why would doctrine be important in turning broken families right-side up? Well, when doctrine is properly taught, it is transformational not only for the family, but also for culture as a whole. I don't have time to demonstrate this, but I would encourage you to read R. J. Rushdoony's book, *Foundations of Social Order*, a book that showed how the early church creeds profoundly changed Western civilization. Or read Bruce Ware's book, *The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Trinity as Theological Foundation for Family Ministry*. Without even realizing it, your view of God will shape your view of love,

leadership, delegation, body life, and many other things. So if you are not studying doctrines like the Trinity, five points of Calvinism, Covenant Theology, Postmillennialism, etc., you are depriving yourself of practical change. So John taught doctrine and insisted that she learn proper doctrine regarding Jesus.

### Avoiding bad associations (vv. 7-10)

Fourteen, John encourages this lady to avoid contact with dangerous people in verses 7-10. When families aren't making good progress, help them figure out the bad influences. Maybe its the games they play, the movies they watch, the homeschool coops they are a part of, or something else. We don't have time to get into verses 7-11 and show how John avoided being too controlling on the one hand or leaving her in her naiveté on the other. But he warned her to avoid certain people and teachings.

### Hospitality (v. 10-12)

The last point is hospitality. And I found this one interesting. Here was a broken family that was being admonished in the best ways to show hospitality and how not to show hospitality. But it was assumed that hospitality would be part of her life, even though she was a single mom. 1 Timothy 5 expects even widows with very limited resources to engage in hospitality. There is never an excuse for Christians to not engage in hospitality. Even if you are bedridden in a hospital, your attitudes toward visitors, nurses, and doctors can showcase hospitality. We should even involve down-and-outers in some kind of ministry that reaches out. The last verses of Revelation say, "The Spirit and the bride say come." There should not be any family that is exempted from some form of hospitality. Teach it to your children young and give them opportunities to be hospitable. Some of our single men have not known how to cook, and they have brought some of the most popular food, like cheese crunches and other junk food. But when a church is given to hospitality, it becomes a hospital where broken people can heal.

From start to finish, this is a book that illustrates the pervasive doctrine of the family integrated church. And I have barely scratched the surface. I use this book to teach our interns how to get practical applications from every word and phrase. I haven't decided yet, but I may put up 97 practical and very legitimate applications that I have found in this book. But let's close in prayer and thank God for giving us this beautiful personal letter.

## Appendix A - 97 additional Applications from 2 John

I have framed many of these applications as questions to force the reader to dig out the application for himself/herself. My son Joel has actually come up with a couple more than I did on the first two verses, so there are more than 97. But I submit this list to encourage people to look for more applications from the Scripture By Philip G. Kayser

### Verse 1

1. John knew how to wear more than one hat. Here he is modeling what godly eldering looks like.
2. “Elder” shows both humility (he doesn’t use his role as apostle) and authority (he does not overcompensate by refusing titles or authority)
3. Elders may speak directly to single ladies
4. Elders may speak directly to children (“to...her children”)
5. The word “lady” (κυρία) indicates that she is the head of her home. Elders may not overstep family jurisdiction in even a single mother home.
6. “her children” not John’s children.
7. Elders should love the children in their church (“whom I love”)
8. Love’s definition is not left up to us – “whom I love in truth.” If truth is both Word and Christ, then this gives love’s direction/goal, love’s character, love’s motive.
9. How does “love in truth” refute the common saying that doctrine divides, love unites?
10. “Elect lady” – Why is she singled out as elect and not the children? How can we know that people are elect? How can they know they are elect? (2 Peter 1:1-15) Is it presumptuous to speak of people as elect?
11. Leaders should not brush over women and children.
12. John is writing at the peak of the tribulation, yet he takes time to minister. We must love through adversity
13. “and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth” – John affirms the good deeds of others in the church
14. Reminds her of the importance of body life and love

### Verse 2

15. Truth is personal (in us)
16. We can only give what we have appropriated
17. If truth is Christ, then this speaks of indwelling Christ that motivates John. If it is simply Scripture, it is Scripture which motivates him. (“because of the truth”)
18. Dependable leadership rests upon what abides in us forever
19. Being a man of the Word gives security to the congregation because people know where he will always come out on issues. He is predictable and objective because his ministry is defined by the objective Word.
20. Presuppositional apologetics starts with the Word, not with us.

### Verse 3

21. What is the significance of the order – “grace, mercy, and peace.”
22. What is the significance of the “will be with us”)
23. How should promises factor in together with commands in our ministry? In what way do promises give faith and hope? In what way do they motivate? Should promises always precede commands (as in this book)?
24. What is the significance of the “us” (versus the “you” in the KJV)? They are in this together, and both need God’s grace.

25. What is the source of all blessing in this verse? How should that bring humility to an elder? He recognizes that he is not the source of blessing to her; only the conduit.
26. Can an elder do his work apart from God's grace working through him?
27. What is the implication on the doctrine of the Trinity? Is there any implication for leadership? How do the Trinitarian relationships transform leadership and help us to avoid abusive leadership?
28. Is he just repeating himself when he mentions "in truth and love" again, or is there something about the Trinity that we are to imitate? How does truth and love define the relationship of Father and Son? How should it define leaders in relationship to other leaders? Is love different in a non-Trinitarian god versus the Trinity? What about truth? Do both Father and Son equally possess the truth? In what ways same and in what ways different?

#### **Verse 4**

29. What brings rejoicing to the heart of a good elder versus what brings rejoicing to the heart of an abusive leader?
30. How do emotions factor into good leadership?
31. How many children were walking in the truth? What does this say about the rest of them?
32. How does John model good leadership when he is positive despite the fact that some children were messed up? Is John problem focused? Discuss goal oriented and solution oriented people.
33. How does this show God-centered leadership? Why do some leaders get angry? Because their commands are not being followed, versus "as we received commandment from the Father."
34. What is the significance of the "we"?
35. What is the significance of the word "received" in terms of chain of command?
36. Where does John get his cues?
37. Define leadership success and failure.
38. How does this verse show that John really knows the state of his flock?

#### **Verse 5**

39. What is the significance of "And now"? Transitioning in tone.
40. What is the significance of "I plead with you"? Leading, not forcing.
41. Why does he repeat the word "lady"?
42. "not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning; that we love one another." Comment on "not as though" – need for reminders. No need for novelty. Must hold to orthodox faith.
43. How should a leader define the core values that the church should share in common? Law.
44. Is he showing the need to persuade? What does that imply?
45. What is the difference between earnestness and being serious on the one hand and being overbearing and authoritarian on the other hand?

46. What does the word “new” imply about the command? Newness of exemplification (as Christ loved) but not of content (love).
47. Does this verse define any other functions of an elder?

### **Verse 6**

48. Why does he define love to a fellow Christian? What does it imply about our tendencies?
49. What does the “we” imply? All of us are in submission; John is modeling submission. Can an elder have authority if he is not under authority?
50. Explains, teaches
51. Presuppositionalism – always Scripture that is our authority
52. If they have heard this commandment from the beginning, why is he reminding her again? How is John modeling good leadership through reminders?
53. What does “that we should walk in it” imply about the relationship between truth and practice? Do abusive leaders insist that children do as they say, not do as they do?
54. What does the the “as you have have heard... you should walk” imply about God’s expectations?

### **Verse 7**

55. What are the implications of the word “For”?
56. The word “many”?
57. The word “deceivers”?
58. What is one of the big duties of elders that is often neglected? Warnings of danger and of false teachers. Protecting from wolves.
59. What is the difference between John’s sensitivity to the elect lady’s family sins and the sins of these deceivers?
60. How do we train our families in discernment?
61. What is the implication of “gone out”? Does that mean deceivers can be in any congregation? How do we keep this from making us cynical?
62. Does the fact that some of John’s sheep were lost imply that he was a poor shepherd? Should we measure our success or failure by whether people leave or not? (See Christ’s ministry.) Do followers have some responsibility of their own?
63. Is there a sense in which he is training her to be a leader? How is he doing that?
64. How does the phrase, “who do not confess...” imply that John gets deceivers to self-identify? (Illustration of evangelicals who say that Daniel was written in the 2nd century rather than in the 6th )
65. Are these deceivers now in the world? What does this say about a leader’s responsibility to know what is happening the world?
66. What are the implications of John’s negative words – especially “antichrist”?

### **Verse 8**

67. Look to yourselves (or “watch out for yourselves”) implies what? Why would a heretic be a danger to an “elect” person?
68. What does that same term imply is a good thing to promote in our members? That they not be dependent upon us, but begin watching for themselves and noticing dangers themselves.
69. What does the “we” imply? How does this show good leadership?
70. What does the phrase “worked for” imply about John’s leadership responsibilities?
71. Can poor leadership result in everything we have worked for being undone?
72. Can poor leadership result in members losing rewards?
73. Long term focus versus short term gain.
74. Does this verse speak to motivational theory? What is implied in rewards and losing rewards? What’s the difference between full reward and reward?

### Verse 9

75. Whoever. Does this include leaders?
76. Transgresses (παραβαίνω) refers to deviating from a rule. Is it appropriate to have a rule of doctrine (a tradition)?
77. Are there some doctrines more important than others? How does the doctrine of Christ define whether one is in the faith or not?
78. What is the relationship between having doctrine of Christ and having God?
79. Is it possible to have God without doctrine?
80. What do the words “abide...abides” imply? Faithfulness, steadfastness versus being blown about, unstable, novelty.

### Verse 10

81. What is implied about heretics in the phrase “If anyone comes to you”?
82. What is implied about all believers in the phrase “and does not bring this doctrine”? Should all believers be instructed in the basics of doctrine?
83. Why is hospitality not owed to heretics?
84. Why should a JW or Mormon never be invited into your home? Can the demons in them be invited into the home?
85. What is meant by the term “greet”? Is it more than “Hi”? What does this say about our greetings and how they should be improved?

### Verse 11

86. Why is greeting a heretic sharing in his evil deeds?
87. If hospitality and greetings share in a heretics evil deeds, how can the same things share in an elders good deeds?
88. What is involved in the term κοινωνέω?

### Verse 12



89. What is implied in the first word, “Having”? If an elder doesn’t have a good memory, should he keep track of things that he needs to talk to his sheep about? How should he compensate?
90. What about “many things”? Should there be “many things” that elders need to communicate to each sheep?
91. What about “write to you”? Does all shepherding necessitate face to face? What other technologies can be used? Why is writing downplayed?
92. “I did not wish to do so with paper and ink”? What kinds of things are better done face to face?
93. What does “I hope to come to you and speak face to face” imply about good elder shepherding? How are boundaries of propriety maintained?
94. Why does face to face bring fuller joy? What does it imply the presence of a shepherd with his flock? Does his job bring joy?

**Verse 13**

95. Why is it the “children” who bring greetings?
96. Does an elder who has no relationship with the children have some improvements to do?
97. What is implied by the “Amen”?