Walking In the Truth

2 John 1:1-6
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1 John 5:14-21 Summary: Describes how to have confidence before God.

Applications from this passage…
- Confidence in prayer comes from conforming our will to God's will.
- There is a sin leading to physical death so damaging our witness that God calls us home early.
- Intercessory prayer is important.
- God helps us in spiritual warfare.
- Idolatry interrupts fellowship.

2 John is in the spirit of Christian love and each verse is effectively a restatement of what is found in 1 John… **So why is 2 John included in the canon?**

For emphasis… Christian love is important

2 John 1:1-2 – To the elect lady and her children.
THE ELDER, 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.

Who was *The Elder*?
The writer of this book identifies himself as *the Elder*.
- Presumably, his first readers knew exactly who he was, and from the earliest times, Christians have understood this was the Apostle John writing.

Why would the Apostle John refer to himself as *The Elder*?
He was now an old man, generally supposed to be ~90, and therefore uses the term elder, not as the name of an *office*, but as designating his advanced age.
- He was allowed to have been the oldest of all the apostles, and to have been the only one who died a natural death.

Who was *the elect lady and her children*?
Perhaps this was an individual Christian woman John wanted to warn and encourage by this letter.
- Or, the term might be a symbolic way of addressing this particular congregation.

Why didn't John use names here?
John probably did not name himself, *the elect lady* or *her children* by name because this was written during a time of persecution.
- Perhaps John didn't want to implicate anyone by name in a written letter.
- If the letter was intercepted and the authorities knew who it was written to by name, it might mean death for those persons.

Who loved the *elect lady*?
Whomever the elect lady was, she was loved by all who have known the truth.
- If we know and love the truth, we will love those who also know and love the truth
- the truth which abides in us also lives in others who know the truth.

Why did John say he loved in truth?
We see John quite focused on the idea of truth, as he was in all of his writings. He used the word *truth* some thirty-seven times in his New Testament writings.
- This is what binds Christians together: truth.
- It is not social or political or class compatibility.
- This is why truth is important to Christians.

How is it the truth *will be with us forever*?
The truth does not change. The truth will be true *forever*, and we will have the truth forever in eternity.
- Many people today think that the truth changes from age to age and from generation to generation, but biblical truth *will be with us forever*.

2 John 1:3 – John's salutation to his readers.
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.

What is the significance of this greeting?
Grace, mercy, and peace: John presents a slightly expanded version of the standard greeting in New Testament letters.

- He didn't just wish these for his readers; he confidently bestowed them by saying they *will be with you from God the Father*.

What is the difference between mercy and grace?
Mercy and grace are closely related. Grace is getting what we do not deserve; Mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

- Mercy has to do with kindness and compassion; it is often spoken of in the context of God's not punishing us as our sins deserve.
- Grace includes kindness and compassion, but also carries the idea of bestowing a gift or favor.

It may help to view mercy as a subset of grace.

- In Scripture, mercy is often equated with a deliverance from judgment (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:30–31; 1 Timothy 1:13), and grace is always the extending of a blessing to the unworthy.

Why do we need mercy and grace?
We have all sinned (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8).

- As a result of that sin, we all deserve death (Romans 6:23) and eternal judgment in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:12–15).
- Given what we deserve, every day we live is an act of God's mercy. If God gave us all what we deserve, we would all be, right now, condemned for eternity.

Do we deserve the grace of God?
We deserve nothing good from God. God does not owe us any good thing.

- What good we experience is a result of the grace of God (Ephesians 2:5).
- Grace is simply defined as "unmerited favor."
- God favors us—He shows us approval and kindness—in blessing us with good things that we do not deserve and could never earn.

What is "common grace"?
This refers to the blessings that God bestows on all of mankind regardless of their spiritual standing before Him.

Matthew 5:45 – *He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust*

What is "saving grace"?
This is that special blessing whereby God sovereignly bestows unmerited divine assistance upon His elect for their regeneration and sanctification.

- In Christ we receive eternal salvation, forgiveness of sins, and abundant life (John 10:10)—all gifts of grace.

What should be our response to the mercy and grace of God?
This should cause us to fall on our knees in worship and thanksgiving.

Hebrews 4:16 – *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

What is the significance of his greeting *in truth and love*?
John can hardly write a verse without mentioning these two of his favorite topics. The *grace, mercy, and peace* God has for us are all given *in truth and love*.

- Apart from God's *truth and love*, we can never really have *grace, mercy, and peace*.

What is the significance of John referring to Jesus as *the Son of the Father*?
The apostle still keeps in view the *miraculous conception* of Christ; a thing which the *Gnostics* absolutely denied; a doctrine which is at the ground work of our salvation."

2 John 1:4 – John's joy in their walking in truth
I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.

Why did John rejoice greatly?
This is a pastor's heart — to know that his people are *walking in truth*. While *truth* is not the *only* concern of a pastor, it is a great concern; and it is a great comfort to see those he loves and cares for *walking in truth*.

What did it reveal that John found some of the children walking in truth?
Truth is not only important for its own sake, but also our *walking in truth* shows we are walking with the Lord.

Why is truth so important?
Truth is who God is and what makes spiritual and moral life possible.

John 14:6 – *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me"*

Jesus Himself personifies "the Truth," and God's Word is the reliable, unchanging revelation of that truth.

What does truth reveal about ourselves?
When you encounter divine truth, you get an accurate diagnosis of your condition (like a doctor revealing what's wrong), and only then can the needed healing and change take place.

- Truth exposes error and sin, frees us from deception and bondage, and points us to Christ, who is the way to the Father.

How is the truth liberating?

John 8:32 – *you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*

Truth brings freedom and health by showing what must change and how God has provided the solution in Christ.

Why do truth and love go together?
Truth must be spoken in love: we don't reject gentleness, but we refuse to substitute kindness for honesty. The Bible is the final standard by which all claims are measured, because God cannot lie.

2 John 1:5 – The commandment to love one another.
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.

What plea does John make here?
John was not too proud to beg on such an important matter — not when it came to something as vital in the Christian life as the *commandment* that we must *love one another*.

What was the point of John's saying the command to love one another was not new?
John knew this was nothing new to his readers (he repeated the theme all through 1 John and his gospel).

- Yet because it was so essential, it had to be repeated and used as a reminder.

Why is it so important to love one another?
The integrity of our Christian life can be measured by our love for one another (John 13:35 & 1 John 4:20-21).

2 John 1:6 – Showing the love of God.
This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

How do we know we love God?
If we love God, we will obey His commandments.

- We do this not because we His commandments are burdens for us to bear, but because we see that they are in our best interests.
- They are guides and gifts to us from God.

Why might John have been compelled to remind his readers of the need to obey God?
Perhaps John warned against those who thought the only important thing in the Christian life was a vague love that had no heart for obedience.

- People often fail to distinguish between love and the emotion of love. They are not the same.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Truth and love are critical and must go together.
- We all need God's mercy and grace; thank you Jesus!
- Loving one another and obeying God is proof we are children of God.