

2 John

2 John says "reject false teachers;" 3 John says "receive true teachers;" 1 John shows you how to tell the difference.

1), 2) By the time of this writing, presumably the last decade of the first century AD, John is quite advanced in age. This could give a double meaning to the title he uses for himself, "elder." He certainly was a church leader, and he was clearly old enough to have "elder" as an age recognition. The recipient of the letter may have been an individual person, whose name was left out as a safeguard in the persecutions against believers in the last half of the first century. Also possible is that John wrote to a congregation which he personified as a lady. The relationship of love between believers is built on a shared love for the truth. "Truth" is mentioned 3 times in these 2 verses and again in verse 3. The Word of God is truth; it does not just "contain" truth, nor does it "become" truth. It is truth - plain and simple. Truth binds us together, and truth is eternal. Truth is a report that agrees with reality, and the Scriptures certainly do that.

3) Are there any greater words than the five mentioned here? Grace (God's unmerited favor to sinners), mercy (compassionate withholding of our just deserts), peace (living in a state of harmony with God and with our circumstances), truth (defined above), and love (the decision, followed by action, to pursue the welfare of another, regardless of the cost, and without thought of getting anything in return). And these things are ours from God through His Son, Jesus! Maybe the songwriter had these in mind when he wrote of "the riches of love in Christ Jesus."

4) When we make a happy discovery, we often say, "Eureka!" John does just that here, using the very word *eureka* to describe his discovery that some folks from this congregation were walking in the truth. "Walking around," to be precise. The truth is not confining, but gives us room for self-expressions within obedience to the Word.

5) While many search unendingly for some "new" thing, John urges his readers to compliance with an old truth - that we keep on sacrificially loving one another. It is a command, and it is ancient. Even the law is summarized in our loving of God (the first table of the law) and loving of people (the commands of the second table).

6) Jesus had connected love with keeping His commands in John 14:15. Here the apostle follows that lead, teaching us that such love is seen in those who "walk" in Christ's commands. The word means to "walk around in," signifying the broad scope of obedience, as contrasted to the idea that obeying Christ is somehow confining or restrictive!

7) A major doctrinal issue in the first century centered around the humanity of Christ. Here, as well as in 1 John 4:2, we see the importance of acknowledging Christ's humanity. He was no phantom, no ethereal spirit - He was a real human being. To deny His humanity is deception in the spirit of antichrist. He was God in human flesh.

8) As deception increases, so must our vigilance. Our salvation is not at stake, the Scriptures are clear on that. What we stand to lose is reward. It would be a shame to be empty-handed because of following some deception.

9) Those who belong to Christ and to the Father will be known because they continue in the true doctrine of the Word of God. When people abandon Scripture for some fad, we have no reason to believe they belong to God.

10), 11) The doctrine of the Word of God is important, vital! In the early church, traveling teachers/preachers were most often lodged in the homes of believers - inns and hostels generally being places of ill-repute. If someone came with a heretical teaching, they were not to be granted admission into a believer's home. They were not even to be given a warm salutation! While this may seem coarse and inhospitable, understand that those who would undermine the church by false teachings are enemies of the faith. Enemies are not given quarter in battle, and we are in a battle for the truth! Anyone consorting with the enemy is said to share or fellowship with their wicked works.

12) Perhaps the things John would have written were of a more personal nature - things that could bring harm if intercepted by some who were hostile to the faith of Christ. In any case, he did appear to anticipate visiting them, and in that visit had things he would share face-to-face. The fulness of joy is a theme written about by John in his gospel (15:11, 17:13).

13) A final word of third-party greeting is shared. Perhaps this is word from another congregation, or another individual's children if the recipient is an individual person. Notice that the anonymity is continued, again perhaps because of the fear and threat of persecution.