

Shepherding Notes

2 John

By Caleb Bunch

2 John speaks about rejecting those who bring false teaching. "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works." (vs. 10–11)

It is important to understand that "greeting" does not simply mean saying hello. An official greeting in your home would mean that you would line up your family and announce your guest and introduce them. Similarly, an official greeting in the church would indicate that this person was your guest. And by announcing that they are with you, you would be lending them credibility. John is explaining that to do so would be tantamount to preaching the false gospel with your own lips. Do not give this person a place to stay. Do not support their efforts. Do not give them any standing in the church. Reject them and reject their message.

I know that this has been taught by many as telling you not to allow Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses into your home when they knock on your door. That is not what John had in mind. However, if you are not well versed in the doctrines of the JWs and Mormons, I highly recommend that you politely decline their invitations to converse. But if you know the Word and understand how they have distorted the gospel, John's letter is not prohibiting you from letting them sit on your couch as you share the truth of Christ with them.

So then what does this mean for you? Look at verse 8: "Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward." When you become a believer, you are called to watch your life and doctrine. Let's consider three ways that truth and love work themselves out by presenting three inaccurate beliefs and correcting them — concepts that are infiltrating the church and must be soundly rejected.

"Any Confrontation of Sin Is Unloving"

The Christian life is one of constant confrontation. You will be the one swimming against the current of the world and the culture, and you will feel it. The world tells you to bite your tongue and tolerate anything that you know is wrong. The Scriptures make it clear that we have a responsibility to speak up in love when that confrontation comes. Titus 2:15 tells us to rebuke one another. Colossians 3:16 tells us to admonish one another. Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 teach us how to confront sin as an individual and as a congregation. These are all commands that we are to follow within the church.

"Openly Disagreeing with People of Other Religions Is Unloving"

We live in a pluralistic society. The culture seems to have a strong tolerance for just about any belief except those that come from historic Christianity. The example of the New Testament is exactly the opposite. If you truly love someone, how can you simply cheer them on as they run towards hell? Imagine a doctor who looks at your bloodwork and sees that you have cancer — still at an early stage, quickly treatable — but decides it would be unloving to ruin your day with such dreadful information, so he sends you home. That is a negligent, unloving doctor. Sharing the truth of the gospel is the greatest form of love you can give to an unbeliever. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others."

"Rejecting Sexually Deviant Lifestyles Is Unloving"

The big statement that we hear these days is "love is love." But John is teaching us that anything that does not align with the truth is not love. You should never be rude or unkind to anyone. But you should also never affirm someone in their sin, regardless of what that sin might be. Our world is filled with sexual sin of all sorts — adultery, fornication, pornography, homosexuality, transgenderism — and all of it has been systematically normalized in our society. It is never loving to affirm a lifestyle that is dragging someone to hell. The thing to remember is that convincing the sinner to stop sinning does no good for them unless they come to Christ. Truth with love seeks the good of that person's soul by showing them that Christ is worth giving up any temporary earthly pleasure. Jesus is a treasure greater than anything they are living for.

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