

# "And This is Love"

## The Second and Third Letters of John The Apostle

"And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." —I John 1:6

### "What You Have Worked For" II John 7-13

*This text must be seen in the light of its context. It is not a call to exclusivism. Rather, it is a challenge to discernment in regard to human relationships as they impact the dynamics and results of our testimony for Christ. The larger principle centers in the love of God, and the outworking of our love for Him.*

#### I. WARNING (II John 7)

- A. The profusion of pretenders (v. 7a)
- B. The propaganda of the pretenders (v. 7b)

*"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." — Blaise Pascal*

#### II. WATCHING (vs. 8, 9)

- A. The potential cost and loss in discontinuity (v. 8)
- B. The paradox of distortion and discipline (v. 9)

*"He (Christ) wants a child's heart, but a grown-up's head. He wants us to be simple, single-minded, affectionate, and teachable, as good children are; but He also wants every bit of intelligence we have to be alert at its job, and in first-class fighting trim." —C. S. Lewis, from Mere Christianity*

#### III. WELCOMING (vs. 10, 11)

- A. Hazardous spiritual hospitality (v. 10)
- B. From compromise to collaboration to co-dependency (v. 11)

*"If within us we find nothing over us we succumb to what is around us." —P.T. Forsyth*

#### IV. WITNESSING (VS. 12, 13)

- A. The power of personal communication (v. 12)
- B. The power of prayerful encouragement (v. 13)

*"It is the most natural thing to be like the person you live with most, therefore live most with Jesus Christ." —Oswald Chambers*



The Apostle John, Albrecht Durer

#### **FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, and APPLICATION...**

1. In the opening passage of John's second letter, he emphasizes the scope of Divine love. This theme permeates all that he wrote. Why do you think that he changed the tone to these verses relating to false teaching? What is the real conflict between love and heresy? (Reference I John 2:15-19)
2. This text is also interesting in its reference to losing rewards. Obviously written to believers, what's the liability in regard to tight associations with false teachers? Aren't we supposed to be hospitable to everyone? Note Romans 12:3, I Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:8, I Peter 4:9, III John 8.
3. We can probably understand about inviting heretics, apostates and false teachers in as house-guests. But where do we draw the line between giving them the truth of our testimonies, and totally excluding them? Does some of this impact dialogue, let us say, with Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other deviant advocates?
4. What do we do when we discover that we're losing the debate? Is it possible to sometimes get over-confident, and get too close to the fire? What are our best resources for witnessing to true believers in false doctrine?
5. Verses 12 and 13 testify to John's deep concern for his addressees. With his closing words we sense that he wants to confirm solid doctrinal teaching with them on a personal basis. How must we be cautious in where and how we are taught? Discuss the contemporary attitudes regarding *teaching, experience, relationships and feelings.*