

IN TRUTH AND LOVE

2 John

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How do you evaluate if someone is a Christian or if a religion is a Christian religion? What teachings or beliefs do you think would be a good litmus test for determining their authenticity?
- Have you ever felt challenged to choose between what you believe is true and showing love to someone? Reflect on that experience. How did you decide what action to take? How did you feel before, during, and after the situation?

Sometimes our efforts to stand for what is true and our desire to show love seem to clash. This opposition leaves us feeling like we're on a tightrope...lean too far one way or the other and we'll fall off. Studying 2 John helps us begin to understand what it means to live out our faith in truth and love. The author leaves us with a sincere and urgent warning to guard against the antichrist. Studying this warning helps us understand the biblical definition of just who or what the antichrist is and shows us how our strong roots in truth and love are crucial to defending our faith.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Reflect back on the second question in the Awareness section above. After listening to the program, do you have a different perspective on that personal experience? Do you still perceive a conflict between truth and love in that situation? Which aspects of truth and love seem to conflict? Would you change your behaviors or actions? If so, how would you change them and why?
- How do compassion and sympathy help us speak truth yet show love to one another? Where are you challenged to remember compassion and sympathy as you hold fast to the truth of the gospel?
- What is the difference between love and tolerance?
- Identify scenarios in our cultural milieu where it seems like the truth of the gospel contradicts, or at least makes it challenging to show love. What might it look like to practice self-sacrificing love to protect the truth in these scenarios? What stories of Jesus give us examples of this kind of self-sacrificing love and tenacity of truth?

Related Passages

- **John 1:14**
- **John 13:34-35**
- **Ephesians 4:1-16**

Conclusion

In his commentary *The Early Christian Letters for Everyone*, N.T. Wright offers this reflection on truth in 2 John:

“Truth, for John, is something that goes down deep and spreads out wide. It is what happens when humans, redeemed in the Messiah and renewed by the spirit, think, speak and act in a way which corresponds to God’s plan to renew the whole creation and, indeed, which sets that renewal forward in whatever way they are called to do.”

Pray for this kingdom perspective. Pray that God would grant you the wisdom and insight to hold truth and love in perfect tension. Seek the Holy Spirit’s help and guidance to set yourself, and any hidden selfishness or pride aside, that you might be able to keep focused on God’s plan to renew the whole creation.

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