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### When We Invest in Our Children

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## WHEN WE INVEST IN OUR CHILDREN

A STUDY ON 2 JOHN  
NUMBER 1  
2 JOHN 1-4

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2 JOHN 1-4 "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."

Second John follows First John. Now isn't that a very profound statement? I am sure you wonder why I begin this study with such an amazing insight. The reason why we need a second book is this. First John had been completed for about a year and since that time, a problem had arisen in Ephesus which John did not cover in his first book. In this little one chapter book, John wanted to explain to the people that the background and basis for loving the Lord was doctrine. The word "truth" will occur quite often in this little book and each time it appears, it always refers to doctrine. Many of John's members in Ephesus were lost in the maze of legalism and the formality of worship. It is against this need that John reminds his people of the great importance of Bible doctrine.

Verse 1 "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;" John refers to himself as "Elder" because of his rank. This comes from a greek word presbuteros. It is exactly the same in meaning as the greek word episkopos which the translators of the King James Version called bishops. You see, the translators of the King James Version were Episcopalian and quite naturally they would translate this word "bishop." In the New Testament, when you find these words, they all refer to the same person and in our denomination, we call this person "Pastor." Elder refers to his position, his rank. Bishop refers to his function like the shepherd watching over his sheep. Why does John start with the word elder? The reason is this: Many people of his congregation had gone over to legalism and were involved in pseudo-spirituality and in their legalism, they had questioned the authority of the pastor. Therefore, in this word "elder," he is pulling his rank on them and reminding them who is in charge in the local church.

### Please Notice The Astuteness Of John

Rather than confront these legalists bluntly and personally, John writes a letter to a lady who lived in nearby Laodicea, just a little distance north of Ephesus. In Laodicea there was a wonderful Christian woman named Nymphas. We know this from Colossians 4:15. "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house."

John wanted these superficial people in Ephesus to get this message, but he used some good psychology and wrote to their neighbors instead of writing directly to them. She always came to Ephesus on the shopping days and he knew if he got to her, he would eventually get to them

Keep this in mind as we study this wonderful chapter and see how John was able to drive home some solid doctrine to the people who needed it so much.

### An Elect Lady

John addresses this letter to one he calls "An Elect Lady." This means she was a born again lady. From the Scripture already quoted above, we noticed that the church of Laodicea met in her home. Her husband is not mentioned and evidently he was not around, for what reason we do not know and the letter does not say. But this Elect Lady did a good job rearing her children and she must have been a most unusual woman. Her children were also believers which we conclude from John's statement about them. John loved this woman and her children and he says of them, "I love them in doctrine." We can gather a very important principle from this statement. Knowing how to love comes from knowing doctrine. No doctrine in the mind and this produces an unstable lover. Much doctrine in the mind and we have stability and the foundation for true love.

### The Foundation For Real Love

This brings up a very important point. You can't love Jesus Christ unless you have Bible doctrine in your mind. You can't love Christ because you are sincere. You can't love Christ just because you say you are determined to do so. Doctrine in the mind makes genuine love possible. Doctrine in the mind gives you the capacity for loving Christ. John loved this great faith woman, Nymphas, and her well indoctrinated children and he did so on the basis of Bible doctrine. We have here the present, active, indicative of agapao and it should read, "Whom I keep on loving in doctrine." Nymphas and her children had their good days and their bad days. But when you add it all up, you realize that they had positive volition toward doctrine. They took in doctrinal truth every day and they lived by that doctrine. John loved them for what they were in the Lord. "And her children" is the dative of advantage. It means that it had been to their great advantage that they had come to love doctrine and believe in doctrine. The church in Laodicea was quite safe in her house. When Nymphas passed off the scene that church wouldn't fall apart because it was built on a doctrinal foundation. Those children had learned doctrine and when their mother passed on, they would carry on the church just the same.

### The Great Force That Sustains A Church

Think with me for a moment about the great force that sustains a church. It is not the program, not the social life, not the social ministries and all the many things that people do under the title of "Christian service." That will not sustain a church very long. The real power that sustains a church is Bible doctrine in the minds of the church members. I am writing these words carefully and prayerfully and I ask you to engrave them in your minds. Immanuel and her future are as safe as the Rock of Gibraltar as long as she maintains major emphasis on Bible doctrine. This is the truth about which Jesus spoke when he said, "Ye shall know the truth (true doctrine) and the truth will make you free." Programs, social life and all the exciting things that you experience in the church program will not carry you one foot when the real testing times come. When the real tests come it takes

doctrine to carry you through. I hope you will never forget that. The line of people making their way to my office these days is quite a long line, and every time they get in a jam, they always reach out for the Word of God. Good times without doctrine mean that bad times are just around the corner.

#### A Note To Parents

When your children go berserk, don't blame it on the young people's program at the church or the lack of it. Remember this, doctrine must also be taught in the home. It is just like the Mosaic Law says, we must write the Word of God upon the very doors of the houses where our children grow up. (Deut. 6:6-9) Remember, the next time you lay out the church for not "corralling" your youngsters, ask yourself this question, "Whose genes do they have?" Then ask yourself another question, "Did you ever go berserk yourself?" Quite often we pick out some rotten limb in the family tree or some sorry aunt or uncle who was no good and blame it all on them. But the fact remains, they are your children and they are the product of your home. They have your characteristics. When you see your children, you are looking at yourself. If your children go berserk and you gave them no doctrine, then you must take the responsibility for them. Children can see through phony parents in a minute.

Therefore in this passage we have, "her children whom I love in the sphere of doctrine." It has to start at home. Do you have a church in your house? Now I will make you a promise. I will do my best to give them doctrine here at the church so your task at home will be easier for you. The only way to lead your children into maturity is to give them doctrine. This is the best way to prepare them for life. You can give them a car or a High-Fi or a fat allowance and it won't get the job done. John evidently had made a visit to Laodicea and had been in this home and he knew these children rather well. He loved them for the doctrine they knew and practiced.

Verse 2 "For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." Here we have the basis for spirituality. In this verse we have the basis for happiness in this life and for peace and power in daily living. We have dia with the accusative and it says, "Because of doctrine which dwelleth in us." The word for "dwell" here means to abide. This is doctrine which keeps on abiding in us. Please notice John says "us." Doctrine was in Nymphas, in John, and in all her children. Then it says, "and shall be with us forever." You have heard the old cliché many times, "You can't take it with you." Please remember this does not apply to doctrine. You can and you will take it with you and it will be with you for all eternity. In fact, this is the one thing that you will take with you into eternity. You won't take your palatial home or your savings or your fame or success but you will take your doctrine with you.

Verse 3 "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." Please notice that the order in this verse is very important. We have grace before we have mercy and peace. All that we have in this life that is worthwhile is based on grace. Every good thing that ever comes into your life comes from grace. Please notice that John tells it like it is. He reminds us that all these things are from God the Father

and from God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the prepositional phrase and this means the immediate source of these things. God the Father and God the Son are the immediate source of all these grace things. God the Father planned grace and God the Son opened the door for grace to flow for you and he did this at the cross. Now why isn't the Holy Spirit mentioned here? Because the Holy Spirit in the Church Age has a ministry and that ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit stays in the background and causes attention to be focused on Christ.

Verse 4 "I Rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." This is a great youth verse.

When emphasis is on doctrine, then there is joy. John's joy here is based on something he found in the children of this wonderful woman. John says he derived a wonderful happiness from them and their faith. Then he tells the secret for this joy. He says, "Thy children walking in truth (doctrine)." This is the way it ought to be with all young people. "Walking in truth" means "children learning and living by doctrine they have learned." It is possible for children and young people to walk in doctrine. Peter was big and blundering and for quite a long time he didn't learn very much from Jesus. But he kept coming to Bible class. He would get sleepy and dream about going fishing, but he never gave up. He stayed with it and before he died, he actually became one of the world's greatest men. Paul was entirely different. He got with it from the start. He was converted on the doctrine of positional truth. Christ moved in and took over and Paul climbed quickly and became the strongest doctrine man in the world. Of the eleven believing disciples, John was by far the best. He walked right into the heart of doctrine and his books in scripture are unsurpassed.

#### The Meaning Of Walking In Doctrine

"Walking in doctrine" means using doctrine in daily life. Walking is used here because it illustrates the idea of off again then on again. In walking, half of the time you are off balance. You pick up your foot to take a step and you are off balance until you put your foot down again. Once your foot is on the ground again, you are on balance. So, walking means off again then on again, off again then on again. Doctrine is the power in walking in the Christian life that helps you move from being off balance to being on balance. Doctrine teaches you how to put your foot down and when to put it down. Some learn the easy way and some have to learn the hard way.

#### A Wise Word To The Juvenile Delinquents

Before we close this study of these first four verses of Second John, I would like to say a word to the juvenile delinquents, to those who are going to drop out and get on drugs and get in some real deep trouble. I would like to say a word to the kids who never listen and try to keep all the other kids from listening. I would like to say a word to the kids who write notes in church and try to be a smart-aleck. In spite of all this, some of you will make it because a little doctrine has gotten in and in addition to that your parents and I and your friends are praying for you. In fact, I stopped and prayed for the young people of this church as I wrote this paper.

Learn The Hard Way

Then if you won't listen to me, go out and get some bumps on your head and then get some harsh discipline from God. But all through it, please remember, doctrine is here for you and all that stuff you thought was so smart wasn't quite what you thought it was. THE ONE ROAD TO GOD IS THE ROAD OF BIBLE DOCTRINE.

This verse ends with the words "as we have received a commandment from the Father." Well, please remember this, I, as your pastor, have received a commandment from God the Father to tell you these things. No matter where you go or what you do, you remember this--Back here at Immanuel, Bible doctrine is waiting for you. The key to the happy life is given in 1 John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." There are two things in that verse that are most important. The first is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and the second is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the commandment from the Father.

In a very definite way, these have been family verses and youth verses. I hope you will take these truths into your minds. THE GREATEST THING I WILL EVER DO FOR YOU IS TO GIVE YOU DOCTRINE.