

Bible Studies for Life: August 13

Set Apart in the Way We Live • II John 1-9

By Don Hicks



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2 John is believed by most Christian scholars to have been written about 90 AD or at least between 70 & 100 AD.

John also wrote the Gospel of John; 1 John and 3 John; and Revelation. The Gospel of John tells us several times that John was the disciple that Jesus loved. One example is found in John 20:2 which the Amplified Bible translates: *So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple (John), Whom Jesus loved.*

John wrote the Book of 2 John, *To the elect lady and her children (2 John 1b CSB)*. Many New Testament scholars, teachers, and preachers cannot agree on the meaning of "elect lady." Most either conclude that it is a much loved and respected Christian mother active in the church or a nick name for a church.

I lean to the simpler, more natural meaning of the phrase – the elect lady is a specific but unidentified Christian mother with children. Besides, always leaning toward the simplest, most straightforward meaning here gives us at least two clues to the context.

The first clue comes from verse one: "elect lady and her children." The second contextual hint I find in verse four of the epistle: *I was very glad to find some of your children walking in the truth (2 John 4 CSB)*.

Love is the central theme of this shortest book of the Bible. Also, remember as we continue studying the first three divisions (vv. 1-9) of this 13-verse Book, truth and love are

much intertwined. In the first division of John's letter, the word "truth" is in each of the first four verses.

Let's begin by looking closer at the love emphasis.

Remember, we have already taken note of the great value John placed on being the disciple Jesus loved. The truths of love were very important to the "Loved Disciple" and he wrote in ways that communicated it. Here is one of several possible examples.

So now I ask you, dear lady – not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning – that we love one another (2 John 5 CSB).

Jesus also told us it is important to love one another. This is the way Jesus taught that: *This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you (John 15: 12 CSB).*

The Apostle Paul also helps us understand the meaning of love. Paul wrote, *If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging, (1 Corinthians 13:1 CSB). There is much more to love than loud, empty sounds.*

John said it this way, *This is love: that we walk according to his (God's) commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you walk in love (2 John 6 CSB).*

Paul continues to tell us what it looks like to walk in love, *"...rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1Corinthians 13:6-7 NIV).*

The love between Jesus and John was true and worthy of our emulation. They both walked in love that was practical in its protection, trustworthiness, provision of real hope, and perseverance.

Here is an example of the love that meets a real need. *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary*

the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home (John 19:25-27 CSB).

This story is a clear example of how walking in love will "Set Apart in the Way We Live."

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