

Jan 06, 2019



# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

**Lesson Leaders:**  
James Haymon

**Class Leaders:**  
**Inreach:** Pat Hester  
**Deacon:** C M Hester

## Walk in Love 1 Thess 3:1-5; 2 John 1:4-11

### Lesson Background and Introduction

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians from the city of Corinth in AD 52. The intent of his letters was to help the infant congregation understand his teachings more accurately in his absence. The church in Thessalonica would then be more resistant to heresy. False teachings in the first century had many faces, some more dangerous than others. One particularly dangerous heresy that threatened the church's survival was Judaizing. It was related to the church's emergence from Judaism and separation from the synagogue. Many early Christians were Jews, and some of them saw Christianity as the next step of the Jewish faith—a sort of super-Judaism. Such teachers believed that all aspects of the Jewish law applied to the church, even to believers of Gentile background. This included circumcision for the males and adherence to Jewish food laws for every Christian. The error of Judaizing was a belief that salvation required keeping such laws.

The author given in 2 John is merely "the elder." But the three letters of John have been attributed to John the apostle from the first century. Church tradition tells us that he had come to the city of Ephesus and lived there until his death, sometime before the end of the first century. We do not know the order in which the three letters of John were written. This letter is addressed "to the lady chosen by God and to her children" (2 John 1). The elect lady may be a prominent woman in one of the churches in the Ephesus region, or this may be John's figurative way of referring to the church. The letter encourages its recipients to continue living lives of love but also to be on guard against, and reject, the false teachers who have been visiting their congregation. In so doing, it touches on a then-emerging threat to the first-century church, a threat that scholars today call Docetism. This threat originated with Gentiles and their Greek philosophical traditions. The term Docetism comes from a Greek word that means "to seem." The primary tenet of Docetism was that Christ's sufferings were only apparent; they only seemed real, but were not. As one writer sums it up, Docetism maintained, against Christian affirmations to the contrary, that Christ's existence was "mere semblance without any true reality." We see the apostle John explicitly declare otherwise in 1 John 4:2, 3. He knew that if this teaching prevailed, then the entire basis for the Christian message would be lost. If Jesus did not suffer, then he could not have died. As a result, there would be no death to pay for sin (contrast Philippians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 2:14; etc.). Docetism transformed into the highly destructive heresy of Gnosticism in the second century AD.

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

At one time, I thought my most important duty as a Christian was to tell others about Jesus. I passionately embraced the belief that if I was not witnessing to others about Jesus or trying to recruit new converts, I was not doing God's will. I'm not sure when all that changed. I do know that at some point I realized that knowing what was true about Jesus and proclaiming it to others wasn't enough. What God desired more than proclamation of truth was a life lived in accordance with it and that the only way that could be done was through obedience. The dilemma I faced once I realized how important it was to obey God was where to start. The Jews said that God gave the people 613 commands when they were wandering in the wilderness. Did I need to concern myself with all of these or only the first ten—the Ten Commandments? And what about the other things Jesus told His disciples they were to do? Was I supposed to be concerned about these as well? At one point, I attended a seminar that focused on describing in minute detail how many of these commands were supposed to be observed. This didn't help clarify the issue, however. It only added to the list of things I thought I needed to do if I wanted to obey God. I think that Jesus understood the consternation we may feel as we try to make sense of what it means to be obedient to God. Perhaps that's why He distilled God's commands regarding human relationship down to one by saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). It often requires lots of sacrifice, patience, and perseverance when I am treated unkindly or unfairly. But I know that by doing so, others may be able to see through me what Jesus is like.

*(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)*

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**  
There is never any variation in God's enduring love for us all

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:**  
Father in heaven, we are awed by Your love for us that never changes, never fails, and never ends. We praise You for demonstrating Your limitless love for us through Jesus our Savior and Lord

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**  
*The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works*  
(Ps 145:9 NKJV)

*(from "Our Daily Bread", Aug 1, 2018)*

**Series: Our Love For God**

**UNIT: God is Worthy of Our Love**

**NEXT WEEK**  
**Submit to God**  
(James 4:1-10)

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **The Need for Encouragement (1 Thess 3:1-5)**

#### *Encouragement in the faith (1-2)*

Faith based on seeking the God that exists (Heb 11:6)

Faith that trusts God and His deliverance (Ps 78:21-22)

Faith that results in no condemnation (John 3:18)

Faith that believes that Jesus is God in the flesh and Savior (John 8:24)

Faith that expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6)

Faith that results in entering God's rest (Heaven) (Heb 4:2-3)

#### *Encouragement during afflictions and tribulations (3-4)*

Encouragement in spite of tribulations through perseverance (James 1:2-4)

Encouragement in spite of tribulations through faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Encouragement in spite of tribulations through faithfulness (Rev 2:10)

Encouragement in spite of tribulations through considering God's love (Matt 6:25-26)

Encouragement in spite of tribulations through the indwelling Spirit of Jesus (2 Cor 4:8-12)

#### *Encouragement during temptations (5)*

Encouragement in temptations that come during testing (Luke 8:13)

Encouragement in temptations due to false pride (1 Cor 10:12-13)

Encouragement in temptations that come from own evil desires (James 1:14)

Encouragement in temptations because Jesus sympathizes (Heb 4:15)

Encouragement in temptations through prayer (Matt 26:41)

### **Pathway of Truth (2 John 1:4-6)**

#### *Walking in the truth (4)*

Walking in the truth through the light in the Lord (Eph 5:8-9)

Walking in the truth through working together for the truth (3 John 1:8)

Walking in the truth through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15)

#### *Love one another (5)*

Love one another as God has loved us (John 13:34)

Love one another as a sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2)

Love one another through Jesus making love increase (1 Thess 3:12)

#### *Obedience to the truth (6)*

Obedience to the truth by not distorting God's word (2 Cor 4:2)

Obedience to the truth by working together for the truth (3 John 1:8)

Obedience to the truth by being established in the truth (2 Peter 1:12)

### **Peril to Truth (2 John 1:7-11)**

#### *Refusing Jesus as Christ (7-8)*

Refusing Jesus by disowned disowning Him before men (Matt 10:33)

Refusing Jesus because of hardening of the heart (Eph 4:18)

Refusing Jesus by not being one of His sheep (John 10:26)

#### *Disobedience to God (9-10)*

Disobedience that comes from the influence of Satan (Eph 2:1-3)

Disobedience that will receive just punishment (Heb 2:2)

Disobedience that keeps one from entering God's rest (Heb 4:6)

#### *Fellowship with unbelievers (11)*

Fellowship with unbelievers can cause loss of purity (1 Tim 5:22)

Fellowship with unbelievers can cause consequences (Rev 18:4)

Fellowship with unbelievers can cause divisions and obstacles (Rom 16:17)