

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

"...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE..." ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

VOLUME 3

OCTOBER 22, 2017

ISSUE 17

WE NEED YOU!

By Andrew Dow

During the First World War a now-famous poster was produced. It depicted Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the reader and saying, "I want YOU!" The picture served as a recruitment tool to garner support for the war effort. During those times, all hands were on deck and everyone was needed in whatever capacity they could serve.

Scripture chooses war to illustrate the Christian's life. What we do is in service to our King of kings (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16). We fight against a vicious enemy, Satan (Rev 19:19; Eph 6:11–12). We are given the proper armor and weapons (Eph 6:10–17). That this life is described in these terms is not an accident; we are at war!

To be successful, we need everyone to be engaged and fighting on the same team! God warns us not to "**bite and devour one another,**" and to "**take care that you are not consumed by one another**" (Gal 5:15). Nothing will destroy us quicker than friendly fire. "**Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds... encouraging one another**" (Heb 10:24–25). Don't think for a minute that you are not valuable to this church and to God! Don't think for a minute that someone else is not valuable to this church or to God! This is what Paul teaches in First Corinthians 12:14–26. Friends, In this war we need all hands on deck. Everyone fighting, everyone serving.

SECOND JOHN: BALANCING LOVE & TRUTH

By Andrew Dow

Hopefully you understand that God wants you to “**love your neighbor as yourself**” (Mark 12:31), while also exposing “**deeds of darkness**” (Eph 5:11). Truth and love are difficult concepts to balance, and yet they must be balanced. Fortunately, John’s second epistle addresses these two complementary concepts.

Second John is addressed to “**the chosen lady and her children**” (v. 1), almost certainly a description of a local church. Notice in the first three verses how frequently John ties our two concepts, truth and love, together! This should indicate to us that these concepts are important in Second John. As we continue to read this will become obvious.

Walking in Love: Verses 4–6 contain John’s encouragement that we love each other. He seamlessly weaves truth and love together. John is incredibly happy to hear about how the members of this congregation (*i.e.*, the chosen lady’s children) are walking in truth (*i.e.*, Jesus’ commandments)! Then he declares that the commandment Jesus laid down is “**that we love one another**” (v. 5; cf. John 13:34–35). Do you want to obey God’s every command? It begins with love. Without love we are nothing (1 Cor 13:2).

Abiding in Truth: Verses 7–11 contains John’s warnings about maintaining the truth. First, John warns us that there are many deceivers in the world (v. 7). These people deny fundamental elements of the gospel. Second, John warns us to be watchful (vv. 8–9). Be diligent to abide within the teaching of Christ—truth! Finally, John tells us not support those who go beyond truth (vv. 10–11). Simply put, don’t act like everything is ok when it’s not.

John had “**many things to write**” to this church, but these were the things that couldn’t wait (v. 12). That should tell us how important these things are and prompt us to pay attention to this little book. Walking in love and abiding in truth are two sides of the same coin. You can’t adequately do one unless you are also doing the other. Love other people endlessly, but don’t withhold the truth from them. Take a hard-nosed stance for truth, but always with love as the motive. Second John teaches us not to compromise in our stand for truth or in our love for others.

WATER: A SYMBOL OF LIFE

By Andrew Dow

Have you ever asked yourself, “Why does God want us to be immersed in water?” Of course, God can ask us to do whatever He wants. He doesn’t have to tell us why. However, when we read through the Bible, water plays an interestingly prominent role.

A special point is made to associate the garden of Eden, the place where God would dwell with mankind, with four rivers of water (Gen 2:10–14). Moses, Israel’s savior, was taken out of the water (Exo 2:10). The first plague against Egypt involved water (Exo 7:14–24) and the exodus was completed when water consumed the Egyptians (Exo 14:26–31). In the desert, a place known for a lack of water, God constantly provided water for His people (Exo 15:22–27; 17:6; Num 20:11). The Israelites crossed water to enter the promised land (Josh 3:14–17). Isaiah figuratively foretold the time of Christ when he declared that water will freely flow in the deserts (35:6–7). When Jesus comes on the scene He begins His ministry with with an immersion in water (Matt

