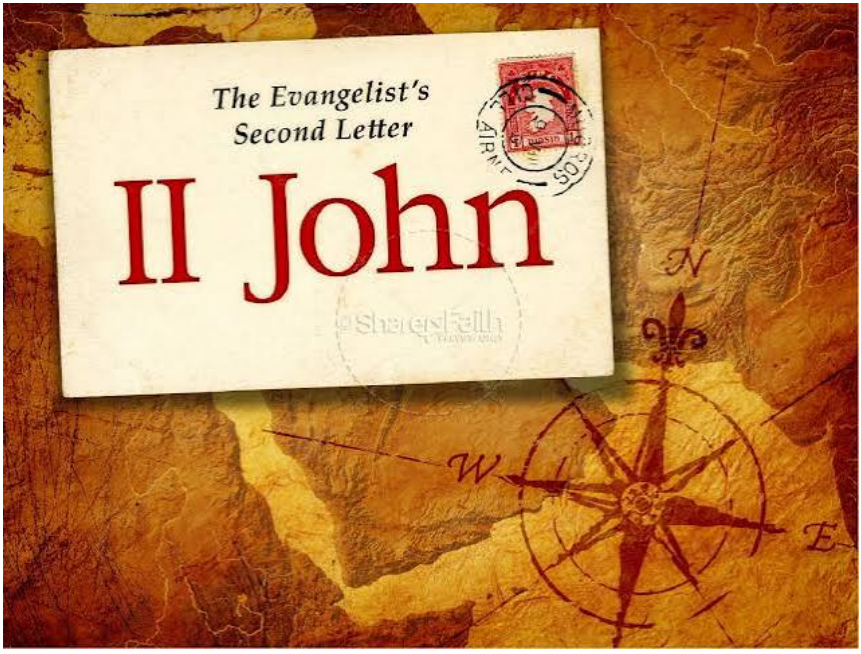
# A Guided Inductive Study of the Second Epistle of John




*"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*
2 Timothy 2:15

## A practical study of the book of 2 John

**by Pastor Richard W. LaFountain**

# How To Study

**Read the Scripture:**
Reading the Scripture is important. Read every word. Don't skip. Don't just read your favorite verses. Read it all. Think about what you are reading. Is there any word or statement you do not understand? Is there anything that confuses you or seems inconsistent with other Scriptures? Is there anything you would like to research? Use at least two translations.

**Translations:**
I suggest New King James, if you like the old wording. The New International Version is helpful. And the English Standard Version is also refreshing. For this study I am using the NKJV because I grew up with KJV and its rhythms are familiar to me. You can use other translations.

**Chapter by Chapter:**
We are going to study the Book of Romans chapter by chapter. Some chapters are longer and have much to think about. Those chapters we have divided into segments so you cover Romans 8 in four weeks instead of one week. We assume you will use one chapter each week. If you are using this for daily readings then you might find it too difficult to answer the questions. That's okay. My hope, however, is that you use is in a weekly Bible study. Anyone can lead it.

**Highlighted Verses:**
I have chosen to highlight what I feel are key verses. You may think others are more important. That is okay. Write that in your personal journal or if you are studying in a group write down other verses you feel are important. Oh, and every chapter has one key verse.

**Discussion Questions:**
We have not attempted to add commentary because we believe the Scriptures speak for themselves and the Holy

Spirit can teach us as much as another person's commentary. I have added suggested questions to answer and discuss. This is especially helpful when studying with a group. You are not limited to my questions, ask your own. In a self-directed study it will be harder to consider your answers to the questions. In a group, however, one question might stimulate other questions. You do not have to answer every question. Use what is helpful and useful and leave the rest.

**Personal Edification:**
I have often taught my students to look for certain things in ever chapter of the Bible. You will not find all five in every chapter, but you should be able to find two or three. Write them down in a journal or share it with a group. It is called the PEPSI acronym.

**Search for Treasure: (P.E.P.S.I.)**

- A **P**-romise to claim.
- An **E**-xample to follow.
- A **P**-rayer concern.
- A **S**-in to avoid.
- An **I**-nstruction to obey.

**Personal Questions:**

- What Verse Challenged you?
- What Verse Encouraged you?
- What Verse Convicted you?
- What Verse Confused you?
- What Verse Startled you?
- What Verse Frightened you?

**Group Questions:**

1. What verse stands out to you in this chapter? Why?
2. What verse causes you to struggle with its demand? Why?
3. What verse encourages your faith the most? Why?
4. Is there a command here you find most difficult to obey? Why?
5. Is there a promise here you want to claim? What?
6. Is there something you need to pray about in this passage? Why?
7. Is there a word / topic here you need to explore more deeply? What?

# Introduction to 2 John

John was writing in a time of great persecution. It was necessary to cloak the identity of the recipient of this letter to protect him or her from persecution.

*"To the Elect Lady and her children."*

Some speculate that the "elect lady" meant the church, not a literal person. Her children were the members of the church. The Bible teaches that the church is the elect (Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 13:8) John often refers to the church as the elect of God and as his dear children.

Others believe the letter was written to real sister in Christ who was a leader in the local church. I that case we have no way of knowing who she was. Some would argue that this proves that women were pastors or leaders of congregations. Later in this letter, he refers to *"the children of her elect sister"* which would give credence to the lady and her sister being actual people.

The purpose of the letter is to warn her that there were many traveling false teachers who expected hospitality from those they visited. Many of these held the belief of Gnostics. John warns here not to receive the into her house or bid them "God's speed." (1:10-11) The word is *"chairo"* in Greek, translated God's speed in ancient English, meaning do not welcome them or bless them in Jesus name. In a Jewish fellowship it would mean to wish them God's peace or "Shalom." In our day and culture it would be to not wish them a good day.

Gnostics believed they had special knowledge (thus gnostic=knowledge) and advanced beyond the teaching of the Apostles. Thus, John says,

*"Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ."* He is referring to Gnostic teachers who traveled throughout the world promoting their false doctrines. Christ was not God, Jesus did not come in the flesh. They taught that there is a divine seed in all of us leading us to an enlightened state

through mystical insights that freed us from the flawed physical and material world.

The teaching of 2 John is clear, avoid those who teach false doctrines. Don't let them into your homes and don't bid them farewell or you will be like them. In other words we are to call out false doctrines wherever we see it. I you welcome them then you are a partaker of their evil deeds. Bad company rubs off. Stay clear of them.

In our present day, the exhortation would be to not allow Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons to enter your home.

# Text of Second John

[1] The Elder,

To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, [2] because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: [3] Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

[4] I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. [5] And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.

[6] This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

[7] For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. [8] Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward.

[9] Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

[10] If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; [11] for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. [12] Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

[13] The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

## Main Thought:

Jesus Christ calls us to be born again and walk in the light of His word. We are to cling to the doctrine of Christ taught in His word. We are to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

## Questions to Discuss:

1 Who do you think the elect lady was? Do you believe women can be pastors? What is your Scriptural proof?

2 What does it mean to walk in love and in the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ?

3 Some would say walking in love is being kind and nice to everyone, including purveyors of false doctrines.

4 Do you know how to discern a cult? What makes a religion or denomination a cult? What is the test of a cult?