



NG Study Guide: 2 John 7-13, "Protect Truth" [7.1.18]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: We're in the midst of a spiritual war. There are many false teachers in the world, deceiving people by spreading false beliefs about Jesus Christ. As believers in Christ we must be discerning about what we're taught, making sure our faith is in the true Jesus as revealed in the Word of God. Only those teachers who teach and obey all Jesus said and did can be trusted. As we encounter false teachers, we must speak the truth in love to them, while at the same time making sure we don't do anything to support them.

There are many false teachers in the world [7]

"*Deceivers*" are those who mislead; imposters. The apostle John says there are many of them in the world. One of the false teachings of these deceivers during John's time was the sinful belief that Jesus never was truly a human being. This was one of the beliefs of a false religion of John's time called Gnosticism.

Although Gnosticism isn't a popular religion today, there are many other false teachers teaching untruths about Jesus. Some teach Jesus was just a good man, or a just wise teacher; others say He never really lived or died on the cross; still others insist Jesus isn't God, or that He's one of many gods. John says all of these false teachers are "antichrists"- they are against Jesus and accomplishing the work of our enemy, Satan.

Unfortunately, just because someone uses the name of Jesus doesn't mean they're referring to the true Jesus of the Bible. And sadly, faith in a false Jesus is a false faith, which cannot save. Only faith in the true Jesus, as revealed in the inspired Word of God, can save someone from their sins and reconcile them to God.

We need to protect our faith [8]

John exhorts his readers to "*look to yourselves*" - to carefully examine and watch out for their faith. He wants to make sure they aren't being tricked into believing falsehoods about Jesus. The best way to identify false teaching, or a false Jesus, is to know the true Jesus really well. God has provided the way for us to know Him- He is revealed clearly in the Bible.

John is worried his readers may experience loss by believing falsehood. Although true believers cannot lose their salvation, we can experience loss, both in this world, and in eternity. In this life we can

experience the loss of our witness for Christ, our peace, and our intimate fellowship with God through Christ. In eternity, we can experience the loss of rewards we've earned through our sacrificial obedience and service to Jesus. John's great desire is for his readers to "receive a full reward."

Those who follow Jesus' teaching know God [9]

"*Transgress*" means to go beyond, neglect, or violate. "*Abide*" means to remain continually. "*Doctrine*" is teaching. John is saying whoever's teaching goes beyond what Jesus taught (adds to it), neglects anything He taught (leaves things out), or violates what He taught (disobeys His teaching), or whomever doesn't continually follow what Jesus taught, doesn't have, or know, God. In other words, whomever follows Jesus' teaching knows God; whomever doesn't, doesn't.

John goes on to clarify that whoever follows Jesus' teaching not only has Christ, but also has the Father. Therefore, we should not only check any teaching we hear with the Word of God; we should also make sure the person teaching is also practicing what he preaches, i.e., is walking the walk as well.

Don't support false teachers in any way [10-11]

So, how should we respond when we encounter someone who is teaching falsehood about Jesus? John's admonition not to receive or welcome false teachers must be understood in context. In his day, these terms referred to showing hospitality to them through providing lodging, meals, and perhaps even financial assistance. John is strongly urging his readers not to provide this kind of support.

In our culture today, there is nothing wrong with saying "Hello!" to someone, or asking how they're doing, even if that person is a false teacher. After all, the Lord instructed us to love our neighbors! However, we must be careful not to say or do anything which can be misconstrued as support, by the false teacher, or by others around us.

Here are a few suggestions on how to respond to a false teacher:

Pray- ask the Lord to give you wisdom; pray for them to know the true Jesus.

Speak- speak the truth, in love.

Bible- focus your conversation on what the Word of God says, specifically about Jesus.

Avoid- avoid saying or doing anything which might be seen as support (e.g., providing money, neighbors' names, encouragement).

Prepare- pray, think and read the Bible to be ready to discuss these things with those God brings into your life.

Remember- there is a difference between someone who doesn't yet know Jesus as their Savior, and someone who is actively, intentionally teaching falsehood about Jesus and encouraging others to believe them. As followers of Christ we are called to love everyone; however, this love must be guided by wisdom and discernment, which the Lord promises to give us if we ask Him.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. What are some of the falsehoods you've heard being taught about Jesus today?

Q2. As believers in Jesus, what can we do to guard our faith?

Q3. What are some appropriate ways in which we can respond to those who are teaching falsehoods about Jesus?

Q4. Why is the truth that Jesus came in the flesh so important?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Visit the web site below and spend time studying what different religions teach about Jesus.

<http://www.religionfacts.com/charts/jesus-world-religions>

2. Read through the gospel of John and write down everything Jesus says about Himself. Take time to review your notes in order to gain a more accurate picture of the true Jesus of the Bible.

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?

2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?

3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Pray and ask God to provide you with an opportunity to do some small act of love for one of your neighbors this week. When that opportunity arises, take advantage of it, and as you're doing it pray for that neighbor to come to know Jesus as their Savior.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?

2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

1. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
2. **Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
3. **The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
4. **Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. **What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.