

2JOHN, 3JOHN & 1TIMOTHY

2JOHN

2Jn 1:1) My dear congregation, I, your pastor, love you in very truth. And I'm not alone--everyone who knows the Truth (2) that has taken up permanent residence in us loves you. (3) Let grace, mercy, and peace be with us in truth and love from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, Son of the Father! (4) I can't tell you how happy I am to learn that many members of your congregation are diligent in living out the Truth, exactly as commanded by the Father. (5) But permit me a reminder, friends, and this is not a new commandment but simply a repetition of our original and basic charter: that we love each other. (6) Love means following his commandments, and his unifying commandment is that you conduct your lives in love. This is the first thing you heard, and nothing has changed. (7) There are a lot of smooth-talking charlatans loose in the world who refuse to believe that Jesus Christ was truly human, a flesh-and-blood human being. Give them their true title: Deceiver! Antichrist! (8) And be very careful around them so you don't lose out on what we've worked so diligently in together; I want you to get every reward you have coming to you. (9) Anyone who gets so progressive in his thinking that he walks out on the teaching of Christ, walks out on God. But whoever stays with the teaching, stays faithful to both the Father and the Son. (10) If anyone shows up who doesn't hold to this teaching, don't invite him in and give him the run of the place. (11) That would just give him a platform to perpetuate his evil ways, making you his partner. (12) I have a lot more things to tell you, but I'd rather not use paper and ink. I hope to be there soon in person and have a heart-to-heart talk. That will be far more satisfying to both you and me. (13) Everyone here in your sister congregation sends greetings.

3 JOHN

3Jn 1:1) The Pastor, to my good friend Gaius: How truly I love you! (2) We're the best of friends, and I pray for good fortune in everything you do, and for your good health--that your everyday affairs prosper, as well as your soul! (3) I was most happy when some friends arrived and brought the news that you persist in following the way of Truth. (4) Nothing could make me happier than getting reports that my children continue diligently in the way of Truth! (5) Dear friend, when you extend hospitality to Christian brothers and sisters, even when they are strangers, you make the faith visible. (6) They've made a full report back to the church here, a message about your love. It's good work you're doing, helping these travelers on their way, hospitality worthy of God himself! (7) They set out under the banner of the Name, and get no help from unbelievers. (8) So they deserve any support we can give them. In providing meals and a bed, we become their companions in spreading the Truth. (9) Earlier I wrote something along this line to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves being in charge, denigrates my counsel. (10) If I come, you can be sure I'll hold him to account for spreading vicious rumors about us. As if that weren't bad enough, he not only refuses hospitality to traveling Christians but tries to stop others from welcoming them. Worse yet, instead of inviting them in he throws them out. (11) Friend, don't go along with evil. Model the good. The person who does good does God's work. The person who does evil falsifies God, doesn't know the first thing about God. (12) Everyone has a good word for Demetrius--the Truth itself stands up for Demetrius! We concur, and you know we don't hand out endorsements lightly. (13) I have a lot more things to tell you, but I'd rather not use pen and ink. (14) I hope to be there soon in person and have a

heart-to-heart talk. Peace to you. The friends here say hello. Greet our friends there by name.

1 TIMOTHY

1 TIMOTHY

1Ti 1:1) I, Paul, am an apostle on special assignment for Christ, our living hope. Under God our Savior's command, (2) I'm writing this to you, Timothy, my son in the faith. All the best from our God and Christ be yours! (3) On my way to the province of Macedonia, I advised you to stay in Ephesus. Well, I haven't changed my mind. Stay right there on top of things so that the teaching stays on track. (4) Apparently some people have been introducing fantasy stories and fanciful family trees that digress into silliness instead of pulling the people back into the center, deepening faith and obedience. (5) The whole point of what we're urging is simply love--love uncontaminated by self-interest and counterfeit faith, a life open to God. (6) Those who fail to keep to this point soon wander off into cul-de-sacs of gossip. (7) They set themselves up as experts on religious issues, but haven't the remotest idea of what they're holding forth with such imposing eloquence. (8) It's true that moral guidance and counsel need to be given, but the way you say it and to whom you say it are as important as what you say. (9) It's obvious, isn't it, that the law code isn't primarily for people who live responsibly, but for the irresponsible, who defy all authority, riding roughshod over God, life, (10) sex, truth, whatever! (11) They are contemptuous of this great Message I've been put in charge of by this great God. (12) I'm so grateful to Christ Jesus for making me adequate to do this work. He went out on a limb, you know, in trusting me with this ministry. (13) The only credentials I brought to it were invective and witch hunts and arrogance. But I was treated mercifully because I didn't know what I was

doing--didn't know Who I was doing it against! (14) Grace mixed with faith and love poured over me and into me. And all because of Jesus. (15) Here's a word you can take to heart and depend on: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I'm proof--Public Sinner Number One-- (16) of someone who could never have made it apart from sheer mercy. And now he shows me off--evidence of his endless patience--to those who are right on the edge of trusting him forever. (17) Deep honor and bright glory to the King of All Time-- One God, Immortal, Invisible, ever and always. Oh, yes! (18) I'm passing this work on to you, my son Timothy. The prophetic word that was directed to you prepared us for this. All those prayers are coming together now so you will do this well, fearless in your struggle, (19) keeping a firm grip on your faith and on yourself. After all, this is a fight we're in. There are some, you know, who by relaxing their grip and thinking anything goes have made a thorough mess of their faith. (20) Hymenaeus and Alexander are two of them. I let them wander off to Satan to be taught a lesson or two about not blaspheming.

1Ti 2:1) The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. (2) Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. (3) This is the way our Savior God wants us to live. (4) He wants not only us but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we've learned: (5) that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us--Jesus, (6) who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free. Eventually the news is going to get out. (7) This and this only has been my appointed work: getting this news to those who have never heard of God, and explaining how it works by simple faith and plain truth. (8) Since prayer is at the bottom of all

this, what I want mostly is for men to pray--not shaking angry fists at enemies but raising holy hands to God. (9) And I want women to get in there with the men in humility before God, not primping before a mirror or chasing the latest fashions (10) but doing something beautiful for God and becoming beautiful doing it. (11) I don't let women take over and tell the men what to do. (12) They should study to be quiet and obedient along with everyone else. (13) Adam was made first, then Eve; (14) woman was deceived first--our pioneer in sin!--with Adam right on her heels. (15) On the other hand, her childbearing brought about salvation, reversing Eve. But this salvation only comes to those who continue in faith, love, and holiness, gathering it all into maturity. You can depend on this.

1Ti 3:1) If anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, good! (2) But there are preconditions: A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife, cool and collected, accessible, and hospitable. He must know what he's talking about, (3) not be overly fond of wine, not pushy but gentle, not thin-skinned, not money-hungry. (4) He must handle his own affairs well, attentive to his own children and having their respect. (5) For if someone is unable to handle his own affairs, how can he take care of God's church? (6) He must not be a new believer, lest the position go to his head and the Devil trip him up. (7) Outsiders must think well of him, or else the Devil will figure out a way to lure him into his trap. (8) The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. (9) They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. (10) Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. (11) No exceptions are to be made for women--same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overly fond of

wine. (12) Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. (13) Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith. (14) I hope to visit you soon, but just in case I'm delayed, I'm writing this letter so (15) you'll know how things ought to go in God's household, this God-alive church, bastion of truth. (16) This Christian life is a great mystery, far exceeding our understanding, but some things are clear enough: He appeared in a human body, was proved right by the invisible Spirit, was seen by angels. He was proclaimed among all kinds of peoples, believed in all over the world, taken up into heavenly glory.

1Ti 4:1) The Spirit makes it clear that as time goes on, some are going to give up on the faith and chase after demonic illusions put forth by professional liars. (2) These liars have lied so well and for so long that they've lost their capacity for truth. (3) They will tell you not to get married. They'll tell you not to eat this or that food--perfectly good food God created to be eaten heartily and with thanksgiving by Christians! (4) Everything God created is good, and to be received with thanks. Nothing is to be sneered at and thrown out. (5) God's Word and our prayers make every item in creation holy. (6) You've been raised on the Message of the faith and have followed sound teaching. Now pass on this counsel to the Christians there, and you'll be a good servant of Jesus. (7) Stay clear of silly stories that get dressed up as religion. Exercise daily in God--no spiritual flabbiness, please! (8) Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever. (9) You can count on this. Take it to heart. (10) This is why we've thrown ourselves into this venture so totally. We're banking on the living God, Savior of all men and women, especially believers. (11) Get the word out. Teach all these things. (12) And don't let anyone put you

down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. (13) Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. (14) And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed--keep that dusted off and in use. (15) Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! (16) Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation.

1Ti 5:1) Don't be harsh or impatient with an older man. Talk to him as you would your own father, and to the younger men as your brothers. (2) Reverently honor an older woman as you would your mother, and the younger women as sisters. (3) Take care of widows who are destitute. (4) If a widow has family members to take care of her, let them learn that religion begins at their own doorstep and that they should pay back with gratitude some of what they have received. This pleases God immensely. (5) You can tell a legitimate widow by the way she has put all her hope in God, praying to him constantly for the needs of others as well as her own. (6) But a widow who exploits people's emotions and pocketbooks--well, there's nothing to her. (7) Tell these things to the people so that they will do the right thing in their extended family. (8) Anyone who neglects to care for family members in need repudiates the faith. That's worse than refusing to believe in the first place. (9) Sign some widows up for the special ministry of offering assistance. They will in turn receive support from the church. They must be over sixty, married only once, (10) and have a reputation for helping out with children, strangers, tired Christians, the hurt and troubled. (11) Don't put young widows on this list. No sooner will they get on than they'll want to get off, obsessed with wanting to get a husband

rather than serving Christ in this way. (12) By breaking their word, they're liable to go from bad to worse, (13) frittering away their days on empty talk, gossip, and trivialities. (14) No, I'd rather the young widows go ahead and get married in the first place, have children, manage their homes, and not give critics any foothold for finding fault. (15) Some of them have already left and gone after Satan. (16) Any Christian woman who has widows in her family is responsible for them. They shouldn't be dumped on the church. The church has its hands full already with widows who need help. (17) Give a bonus to leaders who do a good job, especially the ones who work hard at preaching and teaching. (18) Scripture tells us, "Don't muzzle a working ox," and, "A worker deserves his pay." (19) Don't listen to a complaint against a leader that isn't backed up by two or three responsible witnesses. (20) If anyone falls into sin, call that person on the carpet. Those who are inclined that way will know right off they can't get by with it. (21) God and Jesus and angels all back me up in these instructions. Carry them out without favoritism, without taking sides. (22) Don't appoint people to church leadership positions too hastily. If a person is involved in some serious sins, you don't want to become an unwitting accomplice. In any event, keep a close check on yourself. (23) And don't worry too much about what the critics will say. Go ahead and drink a little wine, for instance; it's good for your digestion, good medicine for what ails you. (24) The sins of some people are blatant and march them right into court. The sins of others don't show up until much later. (25) The same with good deeds. Some you see right off, but none are hidden forever.

1Ti 6:1) Whoever is a slave must make the best of it, giving respect to his master so that outsiders don't blame God and our teaching for his behavior. (2) Slaves with Christian masters all the more so--their masters are really their beloved brothers! These are the things I want you to

teach and preach. (3) If you have leaders there who teach otherwise, who refuse the solid words of our Master Jesus and this godly instruction, (4) tag them for what they are: ignorant windbags who infect the air with germs of envy, controversy, bad-mouthing, suspicious rumors. (5) Eventually there's an epidemic of backstabbing, and truth is but a distant memory. They think religion is a way to make a fast buck. (6) A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. (7) Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, (8) if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough. (9) But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. (10) Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after. (11) But you, Timothy, man of God: Run for your life from all this. Pursue a righteous life--a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy. (12) Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses. (13) I'm charging you before the life-giving God and before Christ, who took his stand before Pontius Pilate and didn't give an inch: (14) Keep this command to the letter, and don't slack off. Our Master, Jesus Christ, is on his way. (15) He'll show up right on time, his arrival guaranteed by the Blessed and Undisputed Ruler, High King, High God. (16) He's the only one death can't touch, his light so bright no one can get close. He's never been seen by human eyes--human eyes can't take him in! Honor to him, and eternal rule! Oh, yes. (17) Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage-- (18) to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. (19) If they do that, they'll build a treasury that

will last, gaining life that is truly life. (20) And oh, my dear Timothy, guard the treasure you were given! Guard it with your life. Avoid the talk-show religion and the practiced confusion of the so-called experts. (21) People caught up in a lot of talk can miss the whole point of faith. Overwhelming grace keep you!

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