

2 JOHN: OVERCOMING MISLEADING ERROR ON THE LIMITS OF GOD'S FELLOWSHIP
Part I: Appreciating The VALUE Of True Fellowship To Set Its Boundaries Against Ruinous Impostors
(2 John :1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. True spiritual fellowship with God and God's godly people is so rewarding, no believer should want it to be ruined by the intrusion of deceptive and false infiltrators of the faith.
- B. 2 John verses 1-6 presents the tremendous **VALUE** of God's true fellowship in the local Church in part as motivation to motivate believers to want to set its boundaries to protect it from impostors (as follows):

II. Appreciating The VALUE Of True Fellowship To Set Its Boundaries Against Ruinous Impostors.

- A. The "elect lady" in verse 1 is likely a **coded** reference to a church: in verse 13, her "children" and not her "sister" **greet her**, and that makes sense only if the "lady" is a **church** and her "children" its **members**; in such a case, John would be trying to avoid bringing unnecessary persecution upon his readers were his letter to them confiscated and read by the Roman authorities, v. 1, 13; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 905.
- B. Thus, we note John delivered seven **motivating REASONS** to **set protective boundaries** of the local church's practical **godly fellowship**, focusing on its great blessings **opposite** their **lack** by its **LOSS**:
 - 1. First, God's true fellowship fully **unites** its participants versus what its absence does, v. 1a,b versus 7.
 - 2. Second, God's true fellowship **adheres** to an **unchanging body of truth**, producing great stability in mental orientation and life versus what its absence does, cf. 2 John 2, 5 opposite 2 John 7.
 - 3. Third, God's true fellowship leads its participating believers to be recipients of God's grace to handle sin and gain power for Christian life and service opposite what its loss does, cf. verse 3 versus 7a:
 - a. Believers in fellowship with God see God's grace **constantly** (present tense, U. B. S. Greek N. T., 1966 ed., p. 814) and **unconditionally cleansing** them from **ALL** sin when they confess their sins unto the Lord, quite the opposite of what happens in a false fellowship, 1 John 1:9 versus 2 Jn. 7!
 - b. Believers in fellowship with God then see His grace provide them **power** by the indwelling Holy Spirit for attitude and behavior control versus what a loss of such fellowship does, Gal. 5:16, 17-23!
 - c. Believers in fellowship with God see His grace provide **power** by the Spirit and His equipping them with spiritual gifts for blessed functions like (1) power, love and self-discipline in Christian service against forces to the contrary (2 Timothy 1:7 with 1:4; 2:1), (2) for handling unjust persecution for the faith (2 Timothy 1:8 with 2:1), (3) for protection against adopting errant theology (2 Timothy 1:1-14 with 2:1) and (4) for assurances of God's calling and directing them in the ministry they have of the Lord, 2 Timothy 1:1, 2 with 2:1. Such blessings are **absent** in **false** fellowships, cf. Gal. 6:12.
 - 4. Fourth, God's true fellowship leads its participating believers to experience God's help with trials that are not deserved so they can handle even these (as follows) unlike those outside such fellowship:
 - a. The word "mercy" in 2 John 3 (*eleos*, Ibid., p. 827) signifies its recipient most likely suffers from trials he does **not deserve**, trials that arise due to the sins or evils of others or of the world around him, Richard C. Trench, Syns. of the N. T., p. 169; Theol. Dict. of the N. T., vol. II, p. 477.
 - b. Thus, "mercy" here implies those in God's fellowship enjoy His help in handling **unfair** trials!
 - 5. Fifth, God's true fellowship leads its participants to know **peace** from God's provisions for life and service and His help in dealing with unfair trials, something those outside of it cannot know, 2 John 3!
 - 6. Sixth, God's true fellowship leads its participants to know God's great **joy** unlike others, verses 4a, 7a.
 - 7. Seventh, God's true fellowship leads its participants to a merging of love and obedience to God so they **do not know legalist pressure** (2 John 6a versus 7a and 1 John 5:3b) quite opposite others, Gal. 6:12f.

Lesson: As **MOTIVATION** to WANT to SET PROTECTIVE BOUNDARIES of the Church's godly FELLOWSHIP, John stated such fellowship UNITES God's flock, it SETTLES it around an unchanging body of truth, it introduces the blessings of God's GRACE and MERCY and PEACE, it brings GREAT JOY and LIBERTY from LEGALISTIC PRESSURE, blessings impostors SABOTAGE!

Application: May we come so to VALUE the blessed UNITY, SETTLEDNESS, blessings of God's GRACE, MERCY and PEACE, the JOY and FREEDOM from LEGALISTIC PRESSURE that God's true fellowship in the Local Church brings that we be READY to SET PROTECTIVE PRACTICAL BOUNDARIES of that Local Church's fellowship of believers from DESTRUCTIVE IMPOSTORS!