

2 John - Introduction

2 John 1:1-3: “The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”

Well, we start another book today, an epistle and a letter with a purpose. Once again, the difference between just a regular letter and an epistle, is an epistle has with it an emphasis of directing or correcting. So, as we read this particular epistle, we see certain directives that are given to a woman, a lady. As it is addressed to the lady, and as it goes on, there is some correction that is taking place within the passage. Today, we're not going to get too far into the book, but we're going to be going into what I would call the preface of the book and why this book is written. Before I even go into the preface of that, I have to preface that by saying that I've been accused on occasions of being intolerant; have been accused on occasions of being insensitive. There are times that people have addressed me as being chauvinistic, and I am clearly oftentimes politically incorrect. Now that I've established that you don't even have to tell me, I already know that all those things are probably perceived to be true. But as we go through this particular study, it is dealing with the woman. It's dealing with her role, and it's going to be dealing with the men's roles as well. So, I think it's very important to understand that this book gives us not only a direction to women, but actually defines and clarifies the role of men, as those that should be directing, those that should be leading, those that should be the head of the house; and when that doesn't happen, the problems that then begin to ensue. And I know that some cases there's no man in the house at all but that means that you even rely upon the church even more for that direction and correction. In this particular setting you have John who is clearly a loving disciple, as we've been seeing in his books the Gospel of John. As we went through 1 John, and now we will go through 2 John, and we will end up in 3 John; and we went through Revelation; it is interesting that God would choose such a man because of that close relationship to convey these wonderful truths. Oftentimes, when we think of a book like this being so small, you really only have one chapter, the thought is it's probably not that important because it's so small. But you know, this is a very important book in the context in which we live today, and I think it is something that not only you should treasure but should live by as we begin to see some of the fundamental principles of this.

As we come into this letter, what we see repeated in this book are two fundamental words and the 1st is “truth,” and the 2nd is “love.” The way that we've entitled this book is “True Love.” Because those two ingredients are going to be the emphasis of this book; and the thought oftentimes is that you can have one without the other, but they're inseparable. They're

inextricably tied together. That means that you can't separate them, and they belong together. You can't really have love if you don't have truth.

In fact, if you just look with me in 1 Corinthians 13. It gives us a picture of what love is, and if you'll turn there, as it starts off, it begins to define love in 1 Corinthians 13:4,

“Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1 Corinthians 13:5. does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1 Corinthians 13:6. does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth”

What's the motivation behind love? And it has to be truth. Now what we know, according to the epistles, and in particular 1 John is he's already established in 1 John 4, and I would say the two verses that really jump out are verses 8 and 16 where he literally defines love in terms of God. So, it's not like we're confused about what love is. Now, granted, the world will define love in so many different ways. You know, “love is fulfilling my desires” or “love is getting what I want,” or “love is me helping this person do this.” We have all kinds of definitions of love, but the bottom line is that God is love. So, God defines what love is.

As John has already established that fundamental principle that he then is going to tie in that whole concept of truth. Now, the question that you have to ask yourself is, why is he doing this? In particular, to the lady?

As it starts off, if you look at the first verse, “The elder,” it's actually where we get our word “Presbyterian.” “*Presbyteros*” is actually the word elder within the passage, and let me just say this, though it is oftentimes a reference to age, it is not always a reference to age. They would oftentimes call those that were members of the Sanhedrin “elders.” Why was that true? Because they had seniority, and so it would often reflect a person of position or seniority. They had been a believer longer, they had training longer or whatever. The passage starts off with what he writes to the chosen lady. Now, the reason why he mentions this is, and really probably defines her this way, “*eklektos*” is the word that he uses, which is interesting because the name for church is “*ekklēsia*.” So, it's basically the same word, “chosen” or as we think of the word “church,” “*ekklēsia*” means called out, or chosen by God. So, you have this interesting picture of a lady that's defined as one that God has chosen out for himself, a part of the church, and she is a saint or a follower of God. That's what he wants to establish at the beginning. Now, what we see throughout the book is his directives, and once again, you're going to see him emphasizing truth. In fact, it varies. It starts off in 2 John 1,

“The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

2 John 1:2. for the sake of the truth...”

Ok, it's not like we don't know what he's talking about, and you'll see him tie "love" and "truth" together. You look at the end of 2 John 1:3, as he says,

"Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

So, there he is, tying them together; and he'll do this continually throughout the book. His concern is that there are lies that are infiltrating her home. So, he talks about, if you look in 2 John 1:7, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world," see that? "...those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver..."

So, the lies that are now infiltrating, and he will warn her. In fact, the statement will be in 2 John 1:8, "Watch yourselves."

Isn't that what he says? "Watch yourselves," and then he goes on and says, which this is going to be really hard for a woman, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house..."

Well, you and I both know that women are more receptive to people coming in their house than men are, and they're very hospitable, and now she's got to say, "You can't come in my house." What's that about? See, so the direction is going to be very firm within the passage, and he's going to be directing this woman. Also, there's an interesting point, and once again we'll get into more detail as we go into the book. But he states this in 2 John 1:4,

"I was very glad to find," the way that it's worded in the Greek is very interesting, but it is emphasizing, and almost every translation will emphasize this, "some of your children." That's a very interesting point. Not "all of your children," which means that she's going to be called upon to take a certain stand with others of her children. Which, ok, that's going to be very difficult. How do you do that? So, what we have within the passage is the role of the man, i.e., the elder specifically saying this is the way. We don't know why he's having to talk to her. Maybe the husband's gone, maybe she has no husband at this juncture, but there's an influence that's coming into her house and she's got to take care of that influence. Now, because of this, he's going to be very clear, very strong, very loving, but very directive. I just want to emphasize, men, we have a role, and the role is to be the head of the house. Let me just give you some passages and once again, this is all by way of introduction. But 1 Timothy 2 really conveys very strongly, in case you didn't know, there actually is a difference between a man and a woman. An epiphany, I know, just coming down from above the light turned on, but there is a difference, and the clarity is given throughout Scripture, not only in the difference of a man and a woman, but the difference in the role that they have. So, it is actually defined in that 1 Timothy 2, especially at the end, and he says for God first made man. (1 Timothy 2:13)

So, it's sort of like, I remember one of my kids going, "Why are you in charge?" And I go, "I was born first." I mean, I have no other real reason why I'm in charge other than the fact that, I mean, if I was younger, I probably wouldn't be in charge; but that was a sovereign act of God,

and that's the point. God's the One that establishes us. Now, just because somebody has a higher position doesn't mean that they're greater in value; any more than Jesus coming as a servant to the Father doesn't mean that Jesus is less valuable than the Father. But it is establishing the role that He has, and for us not to abide by the role that God gives us, actually causes chaos. If you look in the book of Titus, Paul writes to Titus and he goes, "You got to set things in order. You're in Crete and these people are barbaric, and everything's out of control." So, the first thing he tells him to do is set things in order. One of the first things that he does is he sets elders in positions as leaders. Paul will write to Timothy in the same way in 1 Timothy 3, that they have to be men that rule their house well first, in order then to rule the church.

So, the point is that God has ordained men; and just to give you a passage that nails us even clearer besides 1 Timothy 2, which I'm going to give you a number of passages that make reference to this, but in 1 Corinthians 11, a very simple passage but very clear. I don't know how people get around these passages. Here again, I know I'm insensitive, intolerant and not politically correct, but in 1 Corinthians Chapter 11,

1 Corinthians 11:1. "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:2. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you."

Watch verse 3, very clear verse in case you're ever confused:

"But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

I don't know if that could be any clearer, but in case there's more confusion, go to Ephesians 5 where it says the husband has to be the head of the wife.

Go to Ephesians 6, where it says, I just want to emphasize this, husbands, it is your responsibility to train your children and to instruct them in the Lord, that's your responsibility. Now, praise God for women that will do this when the husband drops the ball, but you'll be held accountable for it. So, in every case, what you see is that God has given leadership into the hands of man; and if you were to make it a conglomerate, he's the shepherd. So, you have men are the leaders, the example, paragon, (Ephesians 5) and the instructors within the household. If you want to know what the role is, that's our role.

In this particular book, you have John taking that role and he's saying, dear lady, this is what you need to do, and then he warns her, "Watch yourself." And then he says, "And you can't do this." So, he's very clear about this. Now, everything that he does is in love, and I have to emphasize this point, that the goal of man is not in any way to railroad mercy and kindness. I know that some women actually think that that's what they try to do, but that's not the goal of men. The goal of his role is to keep feelings and emotions from, I would say, defining mercy and kindness, because a woman, tends to define mercy and kindness according to the feelings and emotions, and that's not always mercy and kindness. It's not always really giving the best thing.

Oftentimes, a person, and a woman in particular will use her perceptions or what she likes, her preferences and her pleasures to define what kindness and goodness is. So, it's up to the man to make sure that truth is not compromised. Here again, one of the main purposes of the church is we are a pillar in support of the truth. Remember, though God is love, He is also, if you look at John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." So, it's impossible to separate the two; and once you begin to try to do that, then what you have is not only confusion, but chaos, pain, suffering, and all these things. So, though oftentimes they think there's good intention, it's up to the man to maintain the integrity of truth, to direct and not to acquiesce, to lead, and not to follow. This is one of the things that I'm going to emphasize in this preface, and one of the great problems that I see. We've raised a society of wimpy, wimpy, wimpy men. It's the nicest way to put it; that aren't leading. They're taking their cues from their wives. Instead of listening to God, they're listening to their wives, and sometimes that can be a good thing, because if the wife loves the Lord, that can be a wonderful thing; but the fundamental point is that you need to be doing the leading and you need to be pointing to Christ. So, as we come to this, this needs to be understood.

Now, we go all the way back to the Old Testament and we begin to see why this is true. In other words, why is this established? Why does God have it this way? Why is the order the way that it is? You're going to see that God has so ordained that, strangely enough, not only God is love, but He's going to also put that on the shoulders of man. That man is the one that must be the one that defines love. If you remember in particular Ephesians 5, where it says, "Ok, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her." So, now it's up to man to set the standard of what love is. So, he's got to get this right. Now, I know that the thought is that love is a womanly thing. That's not true. That's why Paul will write in 1 Corinthians 16, "Act like men, walk in love." Why? Because love is very sacrificial. So, nowhere in Scripture does it say wives sacrifice for your husband. So, the example of love is given to the men. As you go all the way back to the beginning, what you begin to realize is not only are men and women different, but they have different proclivities. They have different drawings, and so they're led by certain things differently. God has ordained this. Nevertheless, once again, though a woman is more sensitive, and I'll use the word "sensitive," to her sensations, that's where you get the word "sensitive" to her senses, and that's not a bad thing in and of itself. You can't allow those things to lead.

If you go all the way back to Genesis 3, we'll maybe set the stage in all of this. Now, if you remember in the garden, you have the woman and I'm not real sure why she was hanging around the tree, but you know, there you have it; and we won't go into the detail of that. Maybe curiosity, I'm not going to say anything, I'll be accused; but anyway, you come to the serpent and the interesting question to me is, why pick on the woman? Why not just go to Adam? Because the woman's more susceptible. You go, "Why is that true?" Because God made them different. How did God make them? That's the question. The question is, God made them to follow. He made them to be the helpmate. He didn't make them to be the leader. So, what does that mean? They're prone to follow. So, they have a lead. Someone's taking the lead.

Obviously in this case, Adam not taking the lead. Somebody comes in and takes the lead, and what's she going to do? Follow, right. So, she's more susceptible, and if you look within the passage, the woman comes back to the serpent as he begins to put questions in her mind.

Genesis 3:2. "The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

Genesis 3:3. but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

Which actually, He didn't say that, but she wants to make Him look a little bit harsher. It makes her look better.

Genesis 3:4. "The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!

Genesis 3:5. 'For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

Now, at this juncture, you would think, well, she's really attracted by the philosophical part of this tree. Probably not; and if you look with me in the verse 6, it says this:

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes..."

Now, those are both senses.

"... and that the tree was desirable to make one wise."

It was the senses that drew her, and then it goes on and says that she ate it; and of course, the man instead of protecting the wife, throws her under the bus. "The woman You gave me..." and he's not doing what he's supposed to be doing. The point is that what you have at the very beginning is the stage set within the book of Genesis, and the stage is fundamentally saying that she was made to follow, and she's drawn by her senses. Now, once again, in and of themselves, these are not bad things. These are not bad traits, however, if the wrong influence comes in, it's a terrible thing. And on top of the fact if the man is not doing what he's supposed to be doing, then the woman is prone to be led by someone that is taking the position to lead. Oftentimes, she'll go towards the realm of the senses. It is interesting that when Paul describes himself as being a kind, and I would say sensitive, he uses the woman as the example of that and his statement in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 is, as he describes himself as gentle, tender, nurturing, and this is really the highlights I think of a woman. I mean it's one of the reasons why you're drawn to them because of their compassion and love in that regard. However, when the woman is not secure in her love with her husband, with the Lord, ultimately, then she begins to seek significance in other places, and this is where the problem begins, and this is where the vulnerability comes in.

If you look with me in Genesis 29, just going to give you an example, and you say, why are you going to Genesis? Well, it's the beginning of everything. So, if you want to know the beginning

of everything, you just go to Genesis. In Genesis 29, we have the scenario and you're probably familiar with this since we've talked about it so much, but the scenario of two women with one husband. And you know each of them are trying to get the love of their husband, but because Leah doesn't feel loved as compared to her sister, who was more beautiful and certainly her husband was drawn to her; she begins to try to find worth in something else, and wouldn't you know, it's in her nurturing, it's in her caring, it's in her children. Ah, so if you read that it says in Genesis 29:31,

“Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

(Genesis 29:32) Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben...” - Meaning “Look a son!”

“...for she said, ‘Because the LORD has seen ...’” That’s the “look” part of it.

“...my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.”

(Genesis 29:33) “Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.’ So she named him Simeon.” - Meaning “Oh, God heard me.”

(Genesis 29:34) “She conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘Now this time my husband will become attached to me...’” Which Levi means attached.

In every case, what you're seeing is that her self-worth is somehow now caught up in her children. “If this guy's not working out, I'm going to find it somewhere else.” Because there's something inside a woman, she has to feel significant in the relationship, she has to feel loved. She has to feel cherished. If the husband's not doing it, what happens? You have got to find it somewhere. So, she begins to invest in these areas, and you see that, which is interesting, and it plays out continually in Scripture. Whether it's Elizabeth in the New Testament or in 1 Samuel 1, with Hannah. I mean, here she is, the woman that doesn't have children and she goes, “How could my husband love me? I have no worth, I have no value.” She tries to find whether it vicariously or whatever, “I'm going to find my worth in my children,” and the woman becomes protective. The fact that she's going to make sure that they have everything, and she's going to fulfill her role and the kids are going to love her for this. I mean, the kids are really going to love it, which is a classic mistake. You know, the more I give my kids, the more they love me? A classic mistake but as we go, why I'm bringing this up is this whole epistle is about you're going to have children that aren't doing the right thing. Now, you're going to have to make a decision, and one of the hardest things for a woman to do is make a decision to take a stand against her children. That’s the hardest thing that the woman will have to do, because so much of her worth is anchored in those kids. Once again, oftentimes because the fulfillment isn't given with the man. There's an interesting passage as well, in Genesis 27, and it’s just a way of cementing this. Within the passage, you have Rebecca, who is more attached to Jacob, because I guess she's kind of living out her life. Esau is a hunter and he's with the guys; but Jacob has an

attachment with his mom. Of course, this makes her feel good about herself. So, the lines have already been drawn. We understand that, but what's interesting to me within the passage, in some cases, women will willingly subvert the truth to elevate the relationship. They willingly subvert the truth. "You know this is a lie." "Eh, maybe not." So, in this particular case, we know that the father was going to give the blessing to Esau. "Well, that can't happen as Jacob's my favorite boy." So, she goes, "I heard what your dad said. I've got a plan." Now, we know according to the passage that the deception is, "We're going to dress you up like your brother. He's going to think, because he can't see well. Subterfuge is going to work. Don't believe me? We got this." We know that Jacob knows it's wrong because he goes, "If my dad tries to feel me, he understands I'm not hairy like Esau, so he's going to think that I deceived him." Well, you did, but what's interesting is deception is only deception if you get caught, right?

Genesis 27:12 reads,

"Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight ..."

Now, what's interesting is he doesn't say to his mom, "This is wrong, mom." He just goes, "If I get caught, then I'll look like a liar." Yeah, but it's not the looking like a liar that's the problem. It's the being the liar that's the problem, but his mom goes, "You're worried about being cursed, right?" "Yeah, I'm worried about being cursed." "I'll take the curse." What a wonderful mom. She'll take the curse for me.

(Genesis 27:13) "But his mother said to him, 'Your curse be on me...'"

Oh, give that mom a badge, give her an extra card on Mother's Day. She's a wonderful mom because she loves her child. No, she compromised truth. She hates her child; because truth is what will rescue your child. A lie will never rescue them, and their house will be built upon the lie. But the man needs to stand up. The man needs to do what's right, but there's a lot of subterfuge going on. What's interesting within the passage is that there's a willingness to subvert the truth, to cement the worth. There's that willingness and here again, a clear tendency. We know that according to the book of Judges with Micah's mother and you remember the story; Micah steals from his mom, he finally comes clean, and she goes, "He's basically a good boy. I'm going to build a monument unto him." Please, he's a thief. "No, he's not that bad." She sets the boy up for failure. He becomes vulnerable in every area of his life. But hey, she's a good mom because she says, "he's a good boy;" and there's that compromise. If you think about it, it's a compromise of truth continually, and the sad thing is, throughout Scripture, what you have are weak men acquiescing to strong women - Ahab and Jezebel. You know, you read in the book of Kings, and you have Ahab as the king. He's the head of the house. He's the king, but you know things aren't going his way. So, he begins sulking and oh, he wants this particular vineyard, and he can't get it and Jezebel goes, "Oh, I'll get it for you." So, she murders people and she's a good wife and apparently Ahab needs a mother figure. Right? I mean, he literally goes and tells Jezebel that Elijah is bothering him, and she goes after him. I mean, he tells his mommy, I guess, that something's wrong. The influence of women is very

powerful and what's bizarre about this whole dynamic is a woman will compromise for her children and a man will compromise for the woman. You have this interesting, vicious circle, and ultimately the women, or maybe the dogs end up ruling the household, depending on who's in charge in the house. But you begin to see the strange dynamic. When you look at Isaiah, he says there's a curse upon the land. Here's the curse: Women and children will rule over you. (Isaiah 3:12) And he actually uses the word "capricious" within the passage. (Isaiah 3:4) So, what we begin to understand is that people are being led by their emotions. They're being led by their feelings. Emotions and feelings are a wonderful thing when they're led by truth, but if emotions and feelings are leading, then you begin to compromise truth and all kinds of horrible things begin to happen. It's sort of like letting pleasure decide all your decisions for you. So, if it feels good, do it. Well, that could end up pretty bad, see.

So, all the way through, there's a responsibility for the man to maintain this decorum; and you have in the book of Judges the interesting example of Samson and Delilah. How does she begin to control him? "You don't love me." That's what she says. "Oh, yes, I do. Yes, I do." "Prove it, do what I want." And the guy does what she wants. I always thought it was strange with Adam and Eve, Adam didn't even have to be talked to. She goes, "Here." He goes, "Ok." I mean, there's no dialogue like the woman with the serpent. He's just, "Ok," you know? It just shows how easy the man acquiesces. The point of this particular book is that there has to be this decorum. You say, "why?" Because a soul is at stake. Souls are at stake. We're dealing with forever. We don't have the luxury of letting feelings decide. I've had people go, "I don't feel like there is a heaven. I don't feel like there's a hell." Well, I don't care what you feel. That doesn't define truth. So, people are going around making all these kinds of decisions, and unfortunately, because oftentimes the woman is not being directed clearly or loved by her husband, then she begins to let the children make the decisions. I think one of the craziest things I've ever heard is kids are making a decision about what church they go to. I go, ok, where is that coming from? Where is the wisdom in that? Who's leading the household? Well, to the mother, it makes her feel good. She's a great mom. She lets the kids do whatever they want, where they want to go. Well, she may not let them do things that she doesn't want them to do, but in these more important decisions, like their soul, she puts it in the hands of them. Well, I can tell you what children are going to decide: What's more fun, what's more enjoyable for them at the moment. I would have; and you can't allow that to come into play. John is very concerned for this woman. He knows that she has the influence of family. He knows that family are going to put pressure on her, and sadly, to say, a lot of times men look to their wives, and they go, "You decide." And the wife looks at her kids. You know what I'm saying? You know what should be happening men? You should be saying, "Ok, will this lead us to truth? Will this bring the children to righteousness? Will it bring them closer to Christ? That's how we're going to make the decisions." It's your responsibility to do that, and when that's not done, then all kinds of mayhem, all kinds of confusion and all kinds of chaos begin to happen within the home.

God is setting things in order, and this is a very important book. We're going to look at some of the details of this and how it interplays within the realm; but Christ is the way, the truth and

the life. There's a reason why 1 Timothy 3 says, overseers must first be those who rule their own household well, (1 Timothy 3:4) because if you're not ruling your household well, then what is truth? It's no wonder that Pilate goes, truth is according to whatever fits in their lives and their lifestyle. People begin to redefine it. People will compromise truth. Have you noticed that? "Oh, there's no man. There's no woman." There's truth, see, but, if in fact it doesn't feel good, "you're hurting my feelings." And that's the only thing that people have to say nowadays to Christians. "Oh, you're hurting my feelings." "You're not nice." "You're intolerant." And Christians are going, "Woah, that's anathema to me." Stop. If you really love somebody, you'll tell them the truth. Now, you'll speak it in love, but to withhold truth is to not love the people around you. You know, "There's not a heaven. There's not a hell. There's not a Jesus. There's not a resurrection." Why are you withholding the truth? Why are you not being dogmatic about the things that are most important?

Within this particular book, he'll tell this woman, "If they come in your house with a lie, don't let them in. Don't let them in. Get them out of your house." That's going to be a hard decision, but I can tell you this, the kids will always remember, "My mom believed what she said." They knew what truth was, and when all is said and done, and when God begins to move in their lives, and difficulties begin to come, they go, "You know what, I know what the problem is. I strayed from the truth, because truth and love must never separate."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for Your word and how clear it is. We are encouraged by the fact that there is a truth that is absolute. It never changes. It is not faddish. It is in that we bank. We believe that Jesus Christ never changes. If You said You loved us, You love us. If You said You'd never leave us or forsake us, You'll never leave us or forsake us. If You said You always do the right thing, You'll always do the right thing, and that right thing will never change. It will always be the same. We truly have an anchor for our soul; and Lord, You have placed upon the men the responsibility of directing our households in truth, to not compromise truth in any way; to follow You with all of our hearts. Father, You have called upon women, who perhaps even in this particular case did not have a head of the house within there but heard the direction of the church, and the responsibility that she had now to direct her household well, to love her kids enough to say "no;" to love her children enough to tell them what they were going to do, to love her children enough to not withhold truth.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking both men and women to make some decisions today. We oftentimes sing the song "*I decided to follow Jesus*," You're following Him. He doesn't change His path. Who's leading who? What is right? You cannot compromise. Souls are at stake; and let me tell you something, your children are going to see by your actions what you value most. If you value money most, if you value your job most, if you value position most, if you push education most; they'll see that, they'll see what you do. But I can tell you this, it's

not true. There's not safety, there's not security, there's not hope in any of those things, and if you're listening to the world in any way, truth would be totally obscured. You and I have a responsibility. Souls are at stake.