

Discussion Guide

questions to help start or continue conversations about faith

Discussion Guides accompany the weekly message.

The Gorilla & The Lion

A man who is desperate for work applies to a zoo that he's heard has some openings. "Well, it's a little unusual, but I do have something," said the zoo director. "Our gorilla died sometime ago, and we haven't had the money to replace him. If you're willing to wear a monkey suit and impersonate an ape, you've got the job."

It didn't feel terribly authentic, but the man figured a job's a job, so he signed on. After a few awkward days, he began to get into the spirit of the thing, and soon he became one of the zoo's prime attractions. One morning he was swinging from one vine to the next with a little too much animation and inadvertently swung himself right over the wall into the cage next to his – which was occupied by an enormous African lion.

The man could feel the lion's hot breath on his face. He knew he was a goner. Reflexively, he began screaming for help, when suddenly the lion whispered urgently to him, "Shut up, you idiot, or we'll both be out of a job!"

(John Ortberg, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, Zondervan, 2003, p.74.)

Have you ever been deceived, and because of this deception did you make a decision you normally would not make? Maybe you overpaid for something, or you bought something you later regretted. Perhaps you believed a promise, only to find out the promise was empty. How did you feel? What lesson did you learn?

Passage: Read 2 John

Observation (look at the text):

- v. 1-6: With what two themes does John open this letter?
- v. 6: What actions are a result of love?
- v.7-9: What warning does John give? What instruction does John give?
- v.10-11: What are John's instructions regarding a person who comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ?

Interpretation (Understand what it means):

- Truth (v. 1-6): A recent phenomenon that isn't really new, is the idea that we all have our own truth. Before crucifying Jesus, Pilot asked, "What is truth?"
 - Read John 14:6-11. Who is Truth? What does this mean for the "my truth" concept?
- Love (v.1-6) The Beatles famously sang, "All you need is love." But is this true?
 - Read 1 John 4:7-12. Who is Love? Based on John 14 and 1 John 4, what must we do to know and experience the fullness of God's love?
- Deceivers & False Teachers (v.7-9)
 - Read John 8:42-46. Whose desires do those who seek to bring false teachings seek to fulfill? How can we know if a teacher belongs to God?
- Kick them out, WHAT? (v.10-11)
 - Read Luke 14:15-23 – What is God's desire for His house? Who does He want in His house. Who will not be welcome at feast in the Kingdom of Heaven?
 - Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4 – What will false teachers do?
 - Read 1 John 4:1-6 – What are we instructed to do with every teacher? How do we know if a teacher teaches truth?
 - Read Matthew 7:15-20 – How can we distinguish a good teacher from a wolf in sheep's clothing?
 - Read 2 John, v.10 & 11 – what is the danger with associating with false teachers? What are we instructed to do?

Application (Apply the Word of God to life):

2 John is difficult teaching. When you consider 2 John in the greater context of the word of God, John is not saying we should stop meeting with anyone and everyone that does not believe Jesus came in the flesh and that He is the way, the truth, and the life. But we must be on our guard against false teachers and false doctrines. False teachers aside, the parable of the banquet makes it very clear that God wants us to go out and bring as many people as we can with us to the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven.

- In what ways are you living and loving like Jesus, so the Truth of Christ and the Love of God is evident in your life? In what ways do you need to grow? What are you doing, or do you plan to do to grow?
- If 2 John were written to White River Christian Church in 2022, what additional warnings do you think John would include to warn us about allowing false teaching and false doctrine in our meetings? What about in our homes? Are there any false

teachings or false doctrines that you tolerate in your homes? According to 2 John, what should you do?