

Foundations #5 - A Family-Integrated Church

2 John (part 1)

- Intro:
1. Why the issue of church jurisdiction and family jurisdiction is so important to understand
 2. Proof that this book was written to a literal lady who was struggling to raise children alone (as opposed to being written symbolically to the church or to a church).
 - a. If the lady of verse 1 is the whole bride of Christ, then who is her sister (v. 12)? There is no precedent for calling a local church a lady, and having sisters as “brides” is an awkward symbol.
 - b. The strong literary parallels between 2 John and 3 John (see also Philemon) argue for a personal letter, since all agree that 3 John (and Philemon) are personal letters to a literal individual.
 - c. The arguments for 3 John being a personal letter apply equally well to 2 John.
 - d. See reference to house and hospitality (v. 10-11).
 - e. Historical, grammatical, cultural arguments, as well as the fact that this has a long and established interpretation through church history.
 3. Two extremes in understanding the relationship of family and church: a) ignore or erode family government within the church. B) ignore or erode accountability to elders.
- I. The relationship of family government to church government in this book is a helpful corrective to these extremes.
- A. **Avoid the extreme of centralization of power in the family** (home church movement, no eldership, no accountability, serving communion apart from eldership)
 1. Notice that John addresses himself in his capacity as “elder,” not as apostle (v. 1). He is her elder, and exercises authority as an elder (more below). (Argues against home church model.)
 2. Notice that while he recognizes her headship in the home, he addresses both her (vv. 1,4,5,13) and her children (v. 1,6 – plural “you”, 8, 10 – plural “you”, 12 – plural “you,” 13) with the Word of God. (Argues against extreme view that elders must always and only address God’s Word to children through the mediation of the father.)
 3. Notice that this “elder” exercises authority to give commands where they are Biblical commands (vv. 5,6,8,9,10-11). There is “rule.” (cf. Heb 13:7,17,24)
 - B. **Avoid the extreme of centralization of power in the church** (failure to recognize fathers as shepherds, exercising magisterial authority, bypassing parental authority through age segregated teaching, etc.)
 1. Notice that John does not take over her role as head of the household just because her husband is dead. He calls her “lady” which is the feminine for “lord” (v. 1). She is the lord of her home.
 2. Though John has full magisterial power (as an inspired apostle writing an inspired document), in his ecclesiastical role as elder he still models ministerial power. (compare also Paul in Philemon 8-10,14)
 - a) Definition of terms: Magisterial power means authority which is 1) supreme or legislative (in other words, they make up the rules), 2) or it is an authority from which there is no right of appeal and/or 3) carries with it the weight of force.¹ Ministerial power means a subordinate, limited, delegated power which seeks to declare God’s judgments by appeal to God’s revelation.
 - b) Though he doesn’t need to (he is after all inspired), he appeals to Scripture as any other elder would (vv. 1,2,4,5,6,9,10)
 - c) Though she has shown parental failures, John does not take over her parental responsibilities or powers; nor does he imply that the church should. If John does not do so, how much less so should modern church government? Instead, John seeks to persuade from Scripture as to her responsibilities. (vv. 4-6,9).
 - d) He pleads with the lady (v. 5).
 - e) The repercussion of failing to honor church discipline (vv. 7-9) is declaratory in nature (vv. 10-11).
 - C. This book illustrates the fact that **the family retains to itself all powers not explicitly given to the church and state** by the Scripture, but also that **the family must acknowledge the powers God has granted to the church. The family is not dissolved into a mass of individuals within the congregation.** It maintains its family character within the church. **The church is covenanted families** relating to each other in love (vv. 1-2), grace, mercy, peace, truth (v. 3), mutual exhortation (vv. 4ff) and mutual accountability (vv. 4ff).
- II. ...(To be continued)

¹ When the term magisterial and ministerial is applied to reason, it means reason as the final arbiter (magisterial) versus reason being dependent upon divine revelation (ministerial). For example, Jonathan Sarfati gives the following definitions: “The *magisterial* use of reason occurs when reason stands over Scripture like a magistrate and judges it. Such ‘reasoning’ is bound to be flawed, because it starts with axioms invented by fallible humans and not revealed by the infallible God. ... The *ministerial* use of reason occurs when reason submits to Scripture. This means that all things necessary for our faith and life are either expressly set down in Scripture or may be deduced by good and necessary consequence from Scripture.”