

THE DIDACHE

Chapter 1

The Two Ways

1:1 | There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but the difference between the two ways is great.

The Way of Life

1:2 | The way of life is this: "First, you shall love God who made you. Second, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Whatever you do not want to have done to yourself, do not do to others."

1:3 | The teaching of these words is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what credit is it to you if you love those who love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But, as for you, love those who hate you, and you will have no enemy.

1:4 | Abstain from carnal and bodily lusts. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also, and you will be perfect. If someone forces you to go with him one mile, go with him two. If someone takes your cloak, give him your tunic as well. If someone takes from you what is yours, do not demand it back, as you cannot do so.

1:5 | Give to everyone who asks of you, and do not demand it back, for it is our Father's will that we give to all from the gifts we have freely received from Him. Blessed is the one who gives according to the commandment, for he is innocent. But he who receives without need shall be tried as to why he took and for what purpose, and upon imprisonment, he shall be interrogated about what he has done, and shall not be released until he has repaid every last penny.

1:6 | But concerning this, it has also been said: "Let your gift sweat into your hands until you know to whom to give it."

Chapter 2

2:1 | The second commandment of the teaching is this:

2:2 | You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not corrupt children. You shall not be sexually immoral. You shall not steal. You shall not engage in the occult. You shall not mix poison. You shall not abort a child or commit infanticide. You shall not covet your neighbour's belongings.

2:3 | You shall not commit perjury. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not speak evil of anyone. You shall not hold a grudge.

2:4 | You shall not be double-minded or double-tongued, for this is a deadly snare.

2:5 | Your word is not to be false or empty, but must be fulfilled by deeds.

2:6 | You shall not be greedy, nor extortionate, nor a hypocrite, nor malicious, nor proud. You shall not plot evil against your neighbour.

2:7 | You shall not hate anyone. However, some you must reprove; and for some, you must pray; and some, you must love more than your own life.

Chapter 3

3:1 | My child, flee from every evil and from everything close to it.

3:2 | Do not be given to anger, for anger leads to murder. Do not be jealous, nor contentious, nor hot-tempered, for these things produce murderers.

3:3 | My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to sexual immorality. Do not engage in obscene talk, nor let your eyes wander, for these things produce adultery.

3:4 | My child, do not be an observer of omens, since it leads to idolatry. Do not be an enchanter, nor an astrologer, nor a purifier; do not seek after these evils, for these things produce idolatry.

3:5 | My child, do not be a liar, since lying leads to theft. Do not love money, nor be given to vainglory, for these things produce theft.

3:6 | My child, do not be a grumbler, since it leads to blasphemy. Do not be presumptuous, nor evil-minded, for these things produce blasphemy.

3:7 | Rather, be meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth.

3:8 | Be long-suffering, merciful, innocent, gentle, and good, always revering the words you have heard.

3:9 | Do not not exalt yourself, and do not be arrogant. Do not associate with lofty people, but be with the just and humble.

3:10 | Accept the things that happen to you as good, knowing that nothing transpires apart from God.

Chapter 4

4:1 | My child, you must remember, day and night, him who speaks the Word of God to you. Honour him as the Lord, for where the Lord's nature is proclaimed, there He is present.

4:2 | You are to seek daily the presence of the saints, so that you may find rest in their words.

4:3 | You shall not cause division, but must reconcile those who quarrel. You are to give righteous judgement. You shall not show partiality when reproofing transgressions.

4:4 | You are not to be of two minds whether something shall be or not.

4:5 | Do not be a person who stretches out his hands to receive, but withdraws them when it comes to giving.

4:6 | Of whatever you gain by your hands, you are to give a ransom for your sins.

4:7 | You shall not hesitate to give, and when you give you must not grumble, for you will know who the Paymaster who gives good wages is.

4:8 | You shall not turn away the needy. Share everything with your brother, and do not claim anything as your own, for if you are sharers in the imperishable, how much more in the things which perish?

4:9 | You are not to withhold your hand from your son or from your daughter. From their youth, you must teach them the fear of God.

4:10 | You shall not give a command in bitterness to your slave or your maid, whose hope is in God, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both. For He comes not to call the highly esteemed, but those whom the Spirit has prepared.

4:11 | As for you who are slaves, be subject to your master, as to God's representative, in reverence and fear.

4:12 | You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.

4:13 | Do not abandon the commandments of the Lord. Guard what you received, neither adding nor subtracting anything.

4:14 | In church you shall confess your sins, and do not approach to pray with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

Chapter 5

The Way of Death

5:1 | The way of death is this: First of all, it is evil and entirely cursed, full of murder, adultery, lust, sexual immorality, theft, idolatry, satanic arts, the occult, robbery, false witness, hypocrisy, duplicity, deceit, pride, malice, stubbornness, greed, foul speech, jealousy, impudence, arrogance, boastfulness, and lack of fear of God.

5:2 | It is the way of persecutors of the good, of those who hate truth, who love falsehood, who do not know the reward of righteousness, and do not adhere to what is good nor to just judgment. They are not vigilant for good but for evil, from whom meekness and patience are far removed. They are lovers of vanity, who chase after rewards, and are unmerciful to the poor, who have no compassion on the oppressed. They are without knowledge of Him who made them. They are murderers of children, and corrupters of God's creatures. They turn away the needy, oppress the distressed,

advocate for the rich, and unjustly judge the poor. They are utterly sinful! May you be delivered, my children, from all these things.

Chapter 6

Purity of Doctrine and Life

6:1 | See to it that no one leads you astray from the way of life, for such a person teaches without regard for God.

6:2 | If you are able to bear the entire yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect. But if you are unable, do what you can.

6:3 | Regarding food, bear what you are able, but you are to be on your guard against food offered to idols, for this is worship of dead gods.

Chapter 7

Baptism

7:1 | Concerning Baptism, baptise in this way: Having first understood all of these things, baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water.

7:2 | Should you have no running water, then baptise in other water, and if are unable to baptise in cold water, then do so in warm water.

7:3 | However, if you have neither, pour water three times on the head in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

7:4 | Before Baptism, let the baptiser and the person who is to be baptised fast, along with any others who are able. Instruct the one who is to be baptised to fast for one or two days beforehand.

Chapter 8

Fasting

8:1 | Concerning fasts, let them not coincide with the fasts of the hypocrites. They fast on Mondays and Thursdays, so you fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Prayer

8:2 | Neither should you pray like the hypocrites. Rather, as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, pray like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the power and the glory are Yours now and forever.”

8:3 | Pray this three times a day.

Chapter 9

The Eucharist

9:1 | Concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way:

9:2 | First, with regards to the cup:

“We give You thanks, our Father,
for the holy vine of David Your Servant,
which You have made known to us
through Jesus, Your Servant.
To You be glory forever.”

9:3 | And with regards to the bread:

“We give You thanks, our Father,
for the life and knowledge
which You have made known to us
through Jesus, Your Servant.
To You be glory forever.”

9:4 | “As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains,
but was brought together and became one,
so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom.
For Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.”

9:5 | Do not let anyone eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been
baptised in the name of the Lord. For about this the Lord said: “Do not give what is holy
to dogs.”

Chapter 10

10:1 | When you have had your fill, give thanks this way:

10:2 | “We give You thanks, O Holy Father,
for Your holy name,
which You have made dwell in our hearts,
and for the knowledge and faith and immortality,
which You have made known to us,
through Jesus Your Servant.
To You be glory forever.

10:3 | You, Lord Almighty, created all things for Your name’s sake,
and You gave food and drink to humans to enjoy,
so that they may give You thanks.
But to us You have graciously given spiritual food and drink and eternal life,
through Your Servant.

10:4 | For all things, we thank You, O Lord, for You are mighty.
To You be glory forever.

10:5 | Remember Your Church, O Lord.

Deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love,
and gather it together from the four winds,
sanctified into Your kingdom,
which You have prepared for it.
For the power and the glory are Yours now and forever.

10:6 | Let grace come, and let this world pass away.
Hosanna to the God of David!
If anyone is holy, let him come!
If anyone is not, let him repent!
Maranatha! Amen.”

10:7 | Allow the prophets, however, to give thanks as they best see fit.

Chapter 11

Reception of Teachers

11:1 | Whoever comes and teaches you all of the above things, receive him.

11:2 | But if the teacher himself goes astray and teaches some other doctrine contrary to all of these things, do not listen to him. However, if his teaching brings about an increase of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.

Reception of Apostles and Prophets

11:3 | Concerning apostles and prophets, treat them according to the ordinance of the Gospel:

11:4 | Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord.

11:5 | He may stay with you for a day, or two, should there be a need for it. However, if he stays three days, he is a false prophet.

11:6 | When the apostle leaves, let him receive nothing but bread sufficient for the journey to his next night's lodging. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet.

11:7 | Do not test or examine any prophet who speaks in the Spirit, for every sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven.

11:8 | Yet, not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, but only those whose way is of the Lord. From his behaviour, then, the false prophet and the true prophet shall be known.

11:9 | Should any prophet order a meal in the Spirit, he shall not eat of it himself. If he does, he is a false prophet.

11:10 | If any prophet teaches the truth, but does not live in accordance with what he teaches, he is a false prophet.

11:11 | No prophet who is reliable and genuine, though he acts for the earthly mystery of the Church, if he does not teach others to do what he does himself, shall be judged by you, for he has his judgment with God. So also did the prophets of old act.

11:12 | But whoever says in a spirit “Give me money” or something like it, you shall not listen to him. However, if he tells you to give on behalf of others who are in need, let no one judge him.

Chapter 12

Reception of Brothers and Sisters

12:1 | Let everyone who comes in the name of the Lord be received. When you have tested him, you will know — for you will have understanding — of what is true and what is false.

12:2 | If he who comes is simply passing through, help him as much as you can. However, he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, should there be a need for it.

12:3 | If he wishes to settle among you and he is a craftsman, let him work for his bread.

12:4 | Should he have no craft, provide for him as you see fit, understanding that no Christian is to live with you in idleness.

12:5 | If, however, he is unwilling to work with you in this way, then he is using Christ for gain. Beware of such people.

Chapter 13

Provision for Prophets and Teachers

13:1 | Every true prophet who wishes to settle among you is worthy of his food.

13:2 | Likewise, a true teacher is also worthy, like the workman, of his food.

13:3 | Therefore take the firstfruits of the produce of the winepress and the threshingfloor, and of the cattle and sheep, and give these firstfruits to the prophets, for they are your high priests.

13:4 | But if you have no prophet, give them to the poor.

13:5 | If you make bread, take the firstfruits and give them according to the commandment.

13:6 | Likewise, when you open a jar of wine or oil, give the firstfruits to the prophets.

13:7 | Of money and clothes, and any other possessions, take the firstfruits, as it seems best to you, and give according to the commandment.

Chapter 14

The Lord's Day and Purity

14:1 | On Sunday, the Lord's Day, come together, break bread and hold Eucharist. Confess your sins beforehand, so that your offering may be pure.

14:2 | Let no one who has a dispute join you until they have been reconciled, so that your sacrifice is not defiled.

14:3 | For this is the sacrifice of which our Lord spoke of: "In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king", says the Lord, "and my name is held in wonder among the nations."

Chapter 15

Bishops and Deacons

15:1 | Appoint, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, meek men, and not greedy, but honest and approved, for they also carry out the ministry of the prophets and teachers for you.

15:2 | Therefore do not despise them, for they are honoured men among you, together with the prophets and teachers.

Church Discipline

15:3 | Reprove one another not in anger but in peace, as you find it in the Gospel. And let no one speak with anyone who has wronged his neighbour, nor let the offender hear a word from you until he repents.

15:4 | As for your prayers, almsgiving, and all your good works, do everything in accordance with the Gospel of our Lord.

Chapter 16

Endurance in the Faith

16:1 | Watch over your life. Do not let your lamps go out, and do not let your loins be weak but be ready, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord comes.

16:2 | Gather together frequently, seeking the things that are profitable for your souls, for the whole time of your faith will be of no profit to you, unless you are found perfect at the last time.

Apocalypse

16:3 | For in the last days the false prophets and the corruptors will be multiplied, and the sheep will turn into wolves, and love will turn into hate.

16:4 | As lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. Then the deceiver of the world will appear as a “son of God” and will do signs and wonders, and the earth will be given into his hands, and he will commit sins of such severity that have never been done before.

16:5 | Then the human creation will be tested by fire, and many will fall away and perish. But those who endure in their faith shall be saved by Him who became a curse for us.

16:6 | And then the signs of truth will appear: first the sign spread out in heaven, then the sound of the trumpet, and third, the resurrection of the dead.

16:7 | Not of all the dead, however, but as has been said, “The Lord shall come and all His holy ones with Him.”

16:8 | Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.

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