

2 John 1:12-13

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/2john/2john-1/2-john-112-13/>

John has more to say, but concerning things he doesn't want to put down on paper. He intends to visit this undisclosed church and bring it back to the full joy God has to offer.

Now John makes clear he has a lot more to say. But this written message was so urgent he sent it posthaste. This shows how vital it is to stand against deception, and how close this message was to John's heart. John states, *Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face.* John *hopes* to come to see them in person in the near future. These key admonitions in this letter were essential to communicate in *pen and ink*. The rest he hopes to do in person.

His reason for wanting to communicate to them more fully is *so that your joy may be made full*. The word translated *made full* has the idea of filling up a cup until it is overflowing. The word translated *joy* is the Greek word "chara." Here are a few verses where this same word is used:

- "When [the wise men] saw the star [over Bethlehem], they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy [chara]" (Matthew 2:10).
- "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy [chara] over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44).
- Jesus, speaking in the parable of the talents, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy [chara] of your master.'" (Matthew 25:23).

This shows that John's intent is to convey a message to his disciples to show them how to gain the absolute maximum amount of fulfillment from life. Not a fleeting happiness that quickly fades, like a purchase or a sensual pleasure. But a spiritual fulfillment that will last forever. That deep and abiding happiness comes from abiding in Christ, walking in truth, and loving others.

This is the same basic motivation set in John's first epistle:

"These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete" (1 John 1:3).

The word translated *joy* in this verse from 1 John is also "chara" and the word translated "complete" is the same Greek word that is translated "made full" in 2 John 1:12. So in Greek it is the same phrase, expressing the same motivation.

In verse 2 John 1:9, John said that anyone who goes ahead of God, on their own, "does not abide in the teaching of Christ," so they are walking apart from God. This echoes John 15, where John recorded the teaching of Jesus, urging His disciples to abide in Him, just as a branch of a grapevine abides in the vine. At the end of His discourse on abiding, Jesus said:

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full”
(John 15:7-8)

Jesus spoke words about abiding in Him, so that His disciples’ joy could be full. The way to abide in Christ is to keep His commands. Now John is speaking to those whom he is disciplining, that their joy may be full. He is passing along what he learned from Jesus about abiding. And he has emphasized that the way to abide in Christ is to obey His commands in truth, most specifically His command to love one another.

John ends the letter by stating *The children of your chosen sister greet you*. John is likely speaking of the church where he is currently dwelling. John has avoided the name of any persons or places, including himself. He has used “lady” and “sister” as euphemisms for churches. It could well be that John constructed the letter in this manner to avoid persecution, were the letter to be intercepted. John and the other disciples were very bold in their witness. But they were also shrewd, just as they were commanded to be by Jesus (Matthew 10:16).

Biblical Text

¹² Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to *do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full. ¹³ The children of your chosen sister greet you.