

prophets and teachers. Therefore do not ignore them, for they are the men honored among you along with the prophets and teachers. Admonish one another, not in anger but peaceably, as you see it in the Gospel. Moreover, if anyone has wronged another, let no one speak with him, and do not let him hear a word from you until he repents. Your prayers and the gifts you give from your heart and all that you do shall be as you find it in the Gospel of our Lord.

**Watch over your life!** Do not let your lamps go out, and do not loosen the belt around your loins; be ready, for you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming. Come together often and seek that which concerns your souls since the whole time of your faith will be of no use to you unless you are made perfect at the last hour. For in the last days great numbers of false prophets and corrupters will appear. The sheep will turn into wolves, and love will turn into hate. As lawlessness increases, people will hate, persecute, and betray one another. And then the world-deceiver will appear in the likeness of the son of God. He will do signs and wonders; the earth will be given into his hands; and he will commit abominable deeds such as have never been done since eternity. Then the human race will come into the fire of testing, and many will be thrown down by this impact and will perish. But those who remain steadfast in their faith will only just in time be snatched away from the world-deceiver, the cursed one. Then the signs of the truth will appear: first the sign of the outstretched hands in the sky; then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and third the resurrection of the dead, yet not of all, but as it was said, "The Lord will come, and all the holy ones with him." Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of the sky.

The *Didache* (54)

---

# The Didache

---





**THE LORD'S TEACHING BY THE TWELVE APOSTLES** to the heathen: There are two ways: the one is that of life and the other is that of death. There is a great difference between the two ways. The way of life is this: first, you shall love the God who made you; second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Everything that you do not wish to be done to you, do not do to another!

**Now the teaching of these words is this:** Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies. Fast for those who persecute you, for what grace would it be if you love those who love you? Do not even the heathen peoples do that? But love those who hate you, and you will have no enemy. Abstain from the cravings of the flesh and of the body. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also, and you will be perfect. If someone presses you to go with him one mile, get ready for two. If anyone takes away your coat, give him your jacket as well. If any man seizes what is yours, do not demand it back, for you cannot anyway. Give to everyone who asks of you and never demand a return, for it is the Father's will that all should share the gifts we have received.

**Blessed is he who gives** according to the commandment, for he is not guilty. Woe to him who receives. Certainly, if any man is in need and receives help, he is not guilty, but he who is not in need will have to render account why he received and for what purpose. He will be put in prison, his action will be thoroughly examined, and he will not be released until he has handed over the last penny. However, for this case it has also been said: let the gift from your heart sweat in your hands until you find the one to whom to give.

**The second commandment** of the teaching is this: You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not corrupt boys. You shall not practice sexual promiscuity. You shall not steal. You shall not practice magic. You shall not mix poison. You shall not procure an abortion or kill the newborn child. You shall not covet the share that falls to your neighbor. You shall not commit perjury. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not speak evil about others. You shall not be resentful. You shall not be double-minded or

every prophet who teaches the truth is a false prophet if he does not do what he teaches. However, every tested, true prophet who does something related to the universal mystery of the church, yet does not teach others to do so great a thing as he himself does, shall not be judged among you. His judgment rests with God, for the prophets of old also acted in the same way. But if anyone says in the Spirit, "Give me money" or anything else, do not listen to him. However, if he asks you to give something to others in need, nobody shall judge him.

**Anyone who comes** in the name of the Lord shall be received. You will then test him and you will know him, for you will have the understanding to decide between right and left. If the one coming to you is only a traveler, help him as much as you can, but he shall stay with you only for two days, if necessary three. If someone wants to settle among you, let him work in his trade for a living. In case he has no trade or craft, use your discretion and see to it that no idle Christian lives in your midst. But if he will not act accordingly, he wants to make a business proposition of his Christianity. Beware of such men.

**Every true prophet** who wishes to settle among you is worthy of his food. Likewise, a true teacher is just as worthy of his food as a laborer. Therefore always take the first fruits of the produce of wine press and threshing floor, of cattle and sheep, and give these first fruits to the prophets, for they are your highest priests. If however you have no prophet, give them to the poor. When you bake something take the first fruits and give them according to these directions. Likewise, when you open a fresh jar of wine or oil, take the first fruits and give them to the prophets. Also of money and clothing and of any other valuables, take the first fruits as you think right, and give them according to these directions.

**On the Lord's own day** come together, break bread and give thanks, but first confess your transgressions so that your offering may be pure. No one, however, who has a quarrel with his friend shall join you until they are reconciled so that your offering is not defiled. For this is what was said by the Lord: "In every place and at all times you shall offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations."

**Elect for yourselves** overseers and servants worthy of the Lord, men of gentle disposition who are free of the love of money, honest and tried, for they are those who, in serving you, render you the service of the

cerning this, too, the Lord said, "Do not give that which is holy to dogs." After you are satisfied give thanks in this way:

**We give thanks to thee**, holy Father, for thy holy name for which thou hast made a dwelling in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith, and immortality which thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy child. To thee be glory into the ages! Thou, all-powerful ruler, hast established the universe for thy name's sake, and thou hast given men food and drink to enjoy, that they may give thanks to thee. But to us thou hast given the food of the Holy Spirit and the drink of the Holy Spirit and eternal life through thy child. Above all, we give thee thanks because thou art power. To thee belongs the glory into the ages! Remember, O Lord, thy church, to deliver her from all evil and to make her perfect in thy love. Gather her, the consecrated church, from the four winds into thy Kingdom which thou hast prepared for her. For thine is the power and the glory into the ages.

May grace come, and may the world pass away!

May the help of the God of David triumph!

If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him change from the root up!

Our Lord comes!

So it is.

**Trust the prophets** to give thanks as much as they wish.

**Should anyone come** and teach you all these things said above, receive him. However, if he himself is a false teacher and teaches a different teaching leading to dissolution, do not listen to him; but if his teaching increases justice and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.

**Regarding apostles and prophets**, act in accordance with the directions of the Gospel. Every apostle visiting you shall be received as the Lord. He should stay only one day and if it is necessary a second day also. If he stays for three days, he is a false prophet. When the apostle leaves he shall not accept anything except bread for the time until he reaches his next night's lodging. But if he asks for money he is a false prophet.

**As to any prophet** who speaks in the Spirit, this holds good: Do not inquire or censure! For every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. However, not every man who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he has the manner of the Lord. Thus the false and the true prophet shall be known by their manner of life. No prophet speaking in the Spirit who orders the table spread will eat from it unless he is a false prophet. Further,

double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is a deadly snare. Let your speech be neither dishonest nor empty, but let it be full of significance through action. You shall not be rapacious and always want to have more, or be deceitful, or malicious, or imagine yourself to be great. You shall not plot evil schemes against your neighbor. You shall not hate any man. You shall admonish people, you shall pray for people, and you shall love them more than your own life.

**My child, flee from all evil** and from everything resembling it. Do not get angry, for anger leads to murder. Do not get into passionate tempers or be quarrelsome or boil with rage, for all these things breed murder. My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to promiscuity. Do not use foul language or cast lewd eyes, for all these things lead to adulterous acts. My child, do not foretell the future from natural signs, for this leads to idolatry. Do not use magic formulas, or astrology, or purification charms; you should not even wish to watch such things, for they all breed idolatry. My child, do not be a liar, for lying leads to stealing. Do not love money, and do not fall a prey to vain ambition, for all these things lead to theft. My child, do not grumble, for this leads to blasphemy; do not be self-willed or evil-minded, for all these things breed blasphemy. Be gentle-minded, for those of a gentle mind shall possess the earth. Be patient and have a loving heart. Be guileless. Be quiet and good, trembling in all things at the words you have heard. You shall not exalt yourself or allow your heart to be bold and presumptuous. Your heart shall not cling to the high and mighty, but turn to the good and humble folk. Accept as good whatever happens to you or affects you, knowing that nothing happens without God.

**My child, night and day remember** him who speaks God's word to you. Honor him as the Lord, for the Lord himself is in the place where the lordship of the Lord is proclaimed. Seek daily the presence of the people dedicated to God so that you are refreshed with their words. Do not be divisive, but reconcile quarrelers. Be just in your judgments, and do not show partiality in reproofing transgressions. Do not be in doubt whether or not this should be done.

**Do not be one who stretches out his hands** to receive but closes them when it comes to giving. If you have earned something by the work of your hands, pass it on as a ransom for your sins. Do not hesitate to give, and do not grumble when giving, for you will know who is the glorious giver of your reward. Do not turn away from those who are in need, but share all things in

common with your brother. Do not claim anything as your own, for if you have fellowship in the immortal, how much more in perishable things!

**Do not withdraw your hand** from your son or your daughter, but from their youth teach them the fear of God. Do not give orders in anger or bitterness to your man or woman slaves who hope in the same God lest they lose the fear of God who is ruler over you both, for he does not come with his call showing partiality; instead he comes to those whom he has prepared by his Spirit. And you slaves, be subject to your masters as to God's image, in shame and fear. Hate all shamming and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord. Never depart from the commandments of the Lord. Guard what you have received. Add nothing to it and take nothing away. Confess your trespasses in the church and do not go to prayer with a guilty conscience. This is the way of life.

**But the way of death** consists in this: First of all, and above all, it is accursed and full of evil: murders, adulteries, covetous passions, promiscuous sex acts, thefts, idolatries, witchcrafts, magic poisonings, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisies, doubleness of heart, deception, arrogance, malice, conceit, greed, filthy talk, jealousy, impudence, haughtiness, and boastfulness. It is the way of those who persecute the good and hate the truth, who love lying and do not know the reward of righteousness, who do not cleave to the good and to just judgment, who never tire of following evil instead of good, from whom gentleness and patience are remote, who love vanity and are out for reward, who have no heart for the poor and do not stand up for the oppressed, who do not know him who made them, who kill their children and destroy God's creatures, who turn their backs on the poor and oppress the afflicted, who are advocates of the rich and judge the workers unjustly. They are sinners in all things! Save yourselves, children, from all these!

**Be careful that nobody** leads you astray from the way of this teaching lest with his teachings he leads you away from God, for if you can carry the whole yoke of the Lord you will be perfect; but if you cannot, do what you can. In matters of eating take upon yourself what you can, but keep away completely from meat offered to idols, for it represents the worship of dead gods.

**Now concerning baptism**, baptize in this way: after you have said all these things, baptize in running water, in the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit. If you have no running water close by, however, dip in other water. If you cannot do it in cold water, do it in warm water. If you have neither close by, pour water on the head three times, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Before baptism the baptizer and the one who is to be baptized shall fast, and a few others as well if they can. Challenge the one who is to be baptized to fast one or two days. Your fasts shall not take place with those of the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day after the Sabbath. Fast instead on the fourth day and on the day before the Sabbath. And do not pray as the hypocrites do but as the Lord commanded in his Gospel. Pray thus:

Our Father, thou who art in the heavens,  
Thy name be honored;  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
As in heaven so on earth;  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our debts  
As we also forgive our debtors,  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For to thee belong the power and the glory into the ages

**Pray thus three times a day.**

**Concerning the Meal of Thanksgiving**, give thanks in this way, first with the cup:

We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David, thy servant. This vine thou didst make known to us through Jesus, thy child. Glory be to thee into the ages!

**Then with the broken bread:**

We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy child. Glory be to thee into the ages! Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills and became one when it had been brought together, so shall thy church be brought together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom. For to thee belong the glory and the power through Jesus Christ into the ages.

**Do not allow anybody** to eat and drink of your Meal of Thanksgiving except those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord, for con-