

DIDACHE

TEACHINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES



PROLOGUE

The word "**Didache**" comes from the Greek word "**Διδαχή**" (**Didachē**), which means "**teaching**" or "**instruction.**" The term is used to refer to a specific early Christian document titled "**The Didache,**" also known as "**The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.**" This document is a brief early Christian treatise that contains instructions on Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism and the Eucharist, and Church organisation.

The *Didache* was discovered in a monastery in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 1873 by Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Philotheos Bryennios. He found it in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople. The document was part of a manuscript dated to 1056, which also included other early Christian writings like the Epistle of Barnabas and the First Epistle of Clement.

Bryennios published the text of the *Didache* in 1883, bringing it to the attention of scholars and the wider world.

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CHAPTER 1

THE TWO PATHS

“The Lord's teaching to the gentiles by the Twelve Apostles.”

1 There are two paths in life: one leads to Life, and the other to Death, and they are very different from each other.

2 The Way of Life is this: "First, love the God who created you, and second, love your neighbour as yourself. And whatever you wouldn't want done to you, don't do to others."

3 The meaning of these teachings is this: "Bless those who curse you, pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. What good is it if you only love those who love you? Even non-believers do that." Instead, "love

those who hate you," and you will have no enemies.

4 "Avoid physical and bodily desires." "If someone hits you on the right cheek, offer them your left cheek as well," and you will be complete. "If someone forces you to walk one mile, go with them two miles. If someone takes your coat, give them your shirt too. If someone wants to take something that belongs to you, don't refuse" — even if you have the power to.

5 Give to anyone who asks you, and don't turn them away, because it's the Father's will that we share the gifts we've received with others.

Blessed is the one who gives according to these instructions, because they are innocent.

But woe to the one who receives; if someone takes help because they truly need it, they are innocent; but if someone takes it without needing it, they will be judged on why they took it and what they did with it. And in prison, they will be questioned about their actions, and

"they will not be released until they have paid back every last penny."

6 About this, it was also said, "Let your charity sweat in your palm until you know exactly who you are giving to."

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND PART OF THE TEACHING

1 The second part of the teaching is this:

2 "Do not commit murder; do not be unfaithful in marriage; do not engage in same-sex relations; do not engage in sexual immorality; do not steal; do not use magic; do not use charms or spells; do not seek abortions or commit infanticide; do not envy what belongs to others."

3 "Do not lie or give false testimony; do not speak harmfully; do not hold grudges."

4 "Do not be deceitful or double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is a trap leading to death."

5 "Your words should be truthful and meaningful, backed by your actions."

6 "Do not be greedy or exploitative, nor hypocritical, harmful, or arrogant; do not plot evil against your neighbour."

7 "Do not hate anyone; but some people you should correct, some you should pray for, and some you should love even more than yourself."

CHAPTER 3

FURTHER ADVICE FOR NEW BELIEVERS

1 My child, stay away from every evil person and those who act like them.

2 Do not be proud, as pride leads to harmful actions; avoid jealousy, arguments, and anger, as these can lead to violence.

3 Do not be driven by sexual desire, as it leads to immoral behaviour; avoid speaking inappropriately or looking at others with lust, as these can lead to infidelity.

4 Do not pay attention to superstitions, as they lead to idolatry; avoid practicing magic, astrology, or similar activities, as these are forms of idolatry.

5 Do not lie, as lying can lead to stealing; avoid being greedy or vain, as these traits can also lead to theft.

6 Do not complain or be stubborn, as these attitudes can lead to blasphemy; avoid harbouring negative thoughts, as they can lead to speaking against sacred things.

7 Instead, be humble, as humility is valued;

8 be patient, kind, honest, and peaceful, always mindful of the teachings you have received.

9 Do not elevate yourself or be arrogant; instead, associate with righteous and humble people.

10 Accept the challenges you face as part of God's plan, knowing that everything happens for a reason.

CHAPTER 4

DUTIES TO THE CHURCH AND HOUSEHOLD – AVOIDING HYPOCRISY

1 My child, remember day and night those who teach you the word of God, and honour them as you would honour the Lord, because where the Lord's message is shared, He is present.

2 Seek out the presence of holy people regularly to find comfort and guidance in their words.

3 Avoid creating divisions; instead, work to resolve conflicts. Make fair judgments and do not show favouritism when correcting wrongdoing.

4 Be consistent in your decisions. 5

Don't be someone who only receives from others but doesn't give back.

6 Use what you have earned to atone for your sins.

7 Give generously and without complaint, knowing that God rewards those who give willingly.

8 Do not turn away those in need; share everything with your fellow believers and do not claim it all as your own. If you share in eternal blessings, you should also share in the things that are temporary.

9 Do not withhold firm discipline from your children; teach them the fear of God from a young age.

10 Do not be harsh with your servants or employees, who also worship the same God, so

that they do not lose their respect for God, who judges everyone equally.

11 Slaves/employees should respect their masters/employers as representatives of God, with reverence and fear.

12 Reject all forms of hypocrisy and anything that displeases the Lord.

13 Do not abandon God's commandments; keep what you have been taught without adding to it or taking away from it.

14 Confess your sins in the congregation and approach prayer with a clear conscience. This is the Way of Life.

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY OF DEATH

1 The Way of Death is characterised by wickedness and is filled with curses, murders, adulteries, lust, fornication, theft, idolatry, magic, charms, robbery, lies, hypocrisy, deceit, fraud, pride, hate, stubbornness, greed, crude speech, envy, rudeness, arrogance, and boasting.

2 Those who persecute the righteous, hate the truth, and love lies do not understand the rewards of living righteously. They do not follow good or fair judgment, spend their nights not for good but for evil, lack meekness and patience, are obsessed with vanity, seek rewards, are unkind to the poor, neglect the hardworking, do not know their Creator, murder children, corrupt God's creations, turn away the

needy, oppress the distressed, support the rich,
judge the poor unfairly, and live in sin.

May you, my children, be saved from all these.

CHAPTER 6

FINAL ADVICE -- FOOD, AND THINGS OFFERED TO IDOLS

1 Be careful not to let anyone lead you away from this teaching, as their teachings may be without God.

2 If you can fully follow the teachings of the Lord, you will be perfect. If not, do what you can.

3 Regarding food, eat what you can, but strictly avoid anything offered to idols, as it is part of the worship of false gods.

CHAPTER 7

BAPTISM

1 For baptism, do the following: Having covered all these necessary instructions, baptise in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, using running water.

2 If running water is not available, use any other water. If cold water is not available, use warm water.

3 If neither is available, pour water three times on the person's head, saying "In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

4 Before baptising, both the person performing the baptism and the one being baptised should fast, as well as anyone else who can. The person

to be baptised should fast for one or two days beforehand.

CHAPTER 8

FASTING -- PRAYERS

1 Do not fast like the hypocrites who fast on Mondays and Thursdays. Instead, fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

2 Do not pray like the hypocrites. Instead, pray as the Lord instructed in His Gospel:

“Our Father, who is in Heaven, may Your Name be honoured, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive those who owe to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the power and the glory forever.”

3 Pray this prayer three times a day.

CHAPTER 9

THE EUCHARIST

1 Regarding the Eucharist, follow this procedure:

2 For the Cup: "We thank You, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David, Your servant, which You made known to us through Jesus, Your Son. Glory be to You forever."

3 For the Bread: "We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge You revealed to us through Jesus, Your Son. Glory be to You forever."

4 Just as this broken bread was scattered across the mountains but was gathered and became one, so let Your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Your Kingdom. For Yours

is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever."

5 Only those who have been baptised in the Lord's Name should eat or drink of the Eucharist. For the Lord said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs."

CHAPTER 10

THE FINAL PRAYER AFTER THE EUCHARIST

1 After you have finished eating, give thanks like this:

2 "We thank You, Holy Father, for Your Holy Name that You have placed in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith, and eternal life You have revealed to us through Jesus, Your Son. Glory be to You forever.

3 You, Almighty Lord, created everything for the sake of Your Name and provided food and drink for people to enjoy so they could thank You. But You have blessed us with spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Your Son.

4 Above all, we thank You for Your power. Glory be to You forever.

5 Remember, Lord, Your Church. Deliver it from all evil, perfect it in Your love, and gather it from all directions into the Kingdom You have prepared for it. For Yours is the power and glory forever.

6 Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let them come! If anyone is not, let them repent. Our Lord, come. Amen.

7 Allow the prophets to celebrate the Eucharist as they see fit.

CHAPTER 11

TRAVELING TEACHERS – APOSTLES – PROPHETS

1 Whenever someone comes and teaches you the things we've discussed, accept them.

2 However, if the teacher teaches something different that contradicts these teachings, do not listen to them. If their teaching promotes righteousness and understanding of the Lord, welcome them as if they were the Lord himself.

3 Regarding Apostles and Prophets, follow the guidance of the Gospel.

4 Every Apostle who visits you should be welcomed as you would welcome the Lord.

5 However, they should not stay more than one day, or if necessary, a second day as well; if they stay longer, they are considered a **false prophet**.

6 When an Apostle departs, they should take only bread for their journey until they reach their next stop; if they ask for money, they are a **false prophet**.

7 Do not test or question any prophet who is speaking under inspiration, because while other sins can be forgiven, this sin cannot be forgiven.

8 Not everyone who speaks under inspiration is a prophet unless they live according to the Lord's ways. You can identify a **false prophet** from a true prophet by their actions.

9 Any prophet who asks for a meal under inspiration should not partake in it; otherwise, they are a **false prophet**.

10 A prophet who teaches truth but does not follow their own teaching is a **false prophet**.

11 A prophet who has been tested and is found to be genuine, even if they perform a worldly ritual of the Church, should not be judged by you if they practice what they teach. Their judgment is with God, as it was for the prophets of old.

12 However, if anyone asks for money or anything else under inspiration, do not listen to them. But if they ask you to give on behalf of others in need, do not judge them.

CHAPTER 12

WELCOMING TRAVELLERS

1 Whenever someone comes to you claiming to come "in the Name of the Lord," welcome them. However, make sure to test them to understand whether they are genuine or false.

2 If the person is traveling, help them as much as you can, but they should not stay with you for more than two days, or three if necessary.

3 If they want to settle among you and have a skill or trade, they should work for their living.

4 If they do not have a skill, support them according to your ability, but make sure no one stays among you without contributing in some way just because they are a Christian.

5 If they refuse to work or contribute, they might be exploiting the Christian community; be cautious of such individuals.

CHAPTER 13

SUPPORTING PROPHETS AND TEACHERS

1 A genuine prophet who wants to stay among you is "worthy of their food" — meaning they should be supported for their work.

2 Similarly, a true teacher is also deserving of support, just like a worker is worthy of their wages.

3 Therefore, you should give the first portion of your harvest, whether from the vineyard, the threshing floor, or from your livestock, as first fruits to the prophets, since they are your spiritual leaders.

4 If you do not have a prophet among you, then direct your support to the poor.

5 When you bake bread, give the first portion as a contribution following the commandment.

6 Similarly, when you open a container of wine or oil, give the first portion to the prophets.

7 For money and clothing, and all other possessions, take the first fruits and give it according to what you decide is right, following the commandment.

CHAPTER 14

SABBATH WORSHIP

1 On the Lord's Day, gather together to break bread and celebrate the Eucharist. Before doing so, confess your sins to ensure that your offering is pure.

2 Anyone who has a disagreement with another person should not participate in the gathering until they have made amends, so that your worship is not tainted.

3 As the Lord has said, "In every place and time, offer me a pure sacrifice. For I am a great King," says the Lord, "and my name is revered among the nations."

CHAPTER 15

BISHOPS AND DEACONS

1 Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons who are worthy of the Lord: humble, not greedy for money, honest, and trustworthy. They will serve you just as the prophets and teachers do.

2 Do not despise them; they are your respected leaders alongside the prophets and teachers.

3 When correcting one another, do so with peace and not in anger, as instructed in the Gospel. Do not speak to or listen to someone who has wronged another until they have shown repentance.

4 Ensure that your prayers, acts of charity, and all your deeds follow the teachings found in the Gospel of our Lord.

CHAPTER 16

THE END IS AT HAND

1. **Watch over your life:** Keep your lamps burning and stay prepared, because you don't know when our Lord will come.
2. **Gather together often** to seek what benefits your souls, for your faith will only benefit you if you are found faithful at the end.
3. In the last days, false prophets and deceivers will increase, and people will turn against each other, with love turning to hate.
4. As lawlessness spreads, people will betray and persecute one another, and then the deceiver, pretending to be the Son of God, will appear. He will perform signs and

wonders, and the earth will be handed over to him as he commits terrible acts that have never been seen before.

5. Then, humanity will face a great trial by fire, and many will stumble and fall away, but those who endure in their faith will be saved even through this curse.
6. **Then the signs of the truth will appear.**
First, a sign will be seen in Heaven, then the sound of a trumpet, and finally, the resurrection of the dead.
7. but not everyone, just as it was said, "The Lord will come, and all His saints with Him."
8. **Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of Heaven.**

ESSENTIAL FACTS:

Many of the terms we now associate specifically with the Church were actually commonplace in the Greek-speaking world of the first century. The Jewish apostles and prophets adopted Greek terminology to communicate more effectively with the general population, making their teachings more accessible and relatable.

Eucharist: comes from the Greek word *εὐχαριστία* (eucharistia), which means "thanksgiving" or "gratitude."

Bishop: The secular use of *episkopos* carried the connotation of authority and responsibility, particularly in administrative and managerial roles.

Deacon: The term *diakonos* referred to a servant, attendant, or assistant in various settings.

