

The Teaching of the Lord Given to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles

In most translations, there are notes inserted into the text or placed in footnotes pointing to sources or overlaps with other ancient texts. Such apparatus belongs to the world of reading, and would not have been heard when the Didache was being used; rather the text would have 'rung bells' in the memories of the audience as they listened without being distracted as we tend to be by notes. So as to let the text simply ring bells in the memory, this translation is without notes.

- 1.1 There are two ways: one is the Way of Life, the other is the Way of Death; and there is a mighty difference between these two ways.
- 1.2 The way of life is this: first, you shall love God who created you; second, your neighbour as yourself; all those things which you do not want to be done to you, you should not do to others.
- 1.3 The training about these words is this:
Bless those who curse you;
Pray for those who are your enemies;
Do fasts for those who persecute you.
What benefit is it if you love those who love you? Do not even the gentiles do that? Rather, you must love those who hate you, and so you are not to treat the other person as your enemy.
- 1.4 Abstain from carnal desires.
If someone strikes your left cheek, then turn the right cheek towards him also, and you will be perfect.
If someone makes you go one mile, then go the extra mile with him.

If someone takes your coat, then let him have your jacket.
If someone takes your property, then you are not allowed to ask for it back.

1.5 Give to everyone who asks help from you, and do not seek a return because the Father wants his generosity to be shared with everyone.
Blessed is anyone that gives according to this command, for that person goes without punishment. But, watch out for those who received these things: if they receive things from need, then there is no punishment, but if they receive these things without need then they shall have to explain why they acted in that way and they shall be questioned about it when in prison and they will not be released until the last penny is repaid.

1.6 But remember it has also been said that 'you should let your gift sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give it'.

2.1 Now, the second part of the training is this:

2.2 You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not corrupt boys.

You shall not be promiscuous.

You shall not steal.

You shall not practise divination.

You shall not practise with magic potions.

You shall not kill a child in the womb nor expose infants.

You shall not try to take your neighbours' goods.

2.3 You shall not perjure yourself.

You shall not act as a false witness.

You shall not speak evil of others.

You shall not hold grudges.

2.4 Do not be fickle or deceitful because the deceitful tongue is the snare of death.

2.5 Your discourse must neither be full of deceits nor empty, but rather it should be supported by your actions.

2.6 You should not be avaricious, nor greedy, nor hypocritical, nor spiteful, nor disdainful.

You should not be plotting against your neighbour.

2.7 You shall not hate anyone, rather you should correct some people, you should pray for other people, and yet others you should love more than your own life.

3.1 My child, run away from every kind of evil, and even from everything that looks like it.

3.2 Do not let yourself become angry: it may start in anger, but end in murder.

And do not be jealous, nor argumentative, nor someone with a hot temper: these can also end in murder.

3.3 My child, do not lust after sex, for such lust leads on to fornication.

You should not be someone of obscene speech nor someone with a roaming eye, for these too lead on to fornication.

3.4 My child, you must not become someone who works at telling the future by divination, for such doings lead on to idolatry. Nor should you be involved in casting magic spells, nor an astrologer, nor one who purges curses, nor should you allow yourself to become curious about these things, for they all lead on to idolatry.

3.5 My child, do not be one who tells lies, for lying leads on to thieving. And do not be greedy or vain, for these also lead on to thieving.

3.6 My child, do not be someone who grumbles, for it leads on to blasphemy. And do not be arrogant or bad-minded, for these too lead on to blasphemy.

3.7 Rather, you should act with humility for the humble shall inherit the earth.

3.8 You should be patient and merciful and without guile and quiet and good and you should treasure, with respect, these commandments you have received.

3.9 Do not be haughty, nor let your heart draw you off into false pride. You should not associate with the mighty, but live with the people who are righteous and humble.

3.10 Accept as blessings whatever happens to you, being aware that nothing happens without God.

4.1 My child, remember always, day and night, the one who speaks to you the discourse of God, and honour that person as you

would the Lord: for wherever the things of the Lord are spoken about, there the Lord is present.

- 4.2 Furthermore, every day you should seek out the company of the saints so that you can be helped by their conversation.
- 4.3 Do not be someone who creates factions, rather work for reconciliation between parties. You should adjudicate with justice and so not show partiality when correcting transgressions.
- 4.4 You should not be someone who sits on the fence in these matters.
- 4.5 You should not be someone who opens his hands when it comes to receiving, but then keeps them shut when it comes to giving.
- 4.6 When you have earned your keep by the work of your hands, you should offer something for the expiation of your sins.
- 4.7 You must not be slow to be generous with alms, and do not grumble when you do give them, eventually you shall come to know who is the One who is the Good Paymaster who rewards all.
- 4.8 You must not turn away from anyone in need but share everything with your brother holding back nothing as just your individual property. Remember: if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more must you become sharers in what is perishable!
- 4.9 You should not keep back your hand from your son or daughter, but, from their youth, train them in the fear of the Lord.
- 4.10 You shall not give orders to your man-slave or woman-slave when you are angry – remember they hope in the same God as you – because this might cause them to stop respecting God who is over both of you; and remember that he comes to call, without thought of status, those whom the Spirit has prepared.
- 4.11 And slaves, you should be submissive to your masters with respect and fear as to an image of God.
- 4.12 You should hate all sham, and all that is not pleasing to the Lord.
- 4.13 You should not abandon the Lord's commands, but hold fast to what has been handed on to you without addition or subtraction.

4.14 You should acknowledge your transgressions in the church; and you should not set out on your prayers when you have a bad conscience.

This is the Way of Life.

- 5.1 Now, by contrast, here is the Way of Death.
First, it is full of wickedness and is cursed: it is full of murders, adulteries, lusts, acts of fornication, robberies, acts of idolatry, magic and sorcery, thefts, false accusations, sham, double dealing, fraud, arrogance, malicious intentions, stubbornness, covetousness, obscene language, jealousy, haughtiness, pride and pomposity.
- 5.2 This is the way of all those who persecute good people; of those who hate the truth and who love lies; of those who do not know the reward of righteousness, who are not devoted to what is good, and who do not give just judgements because they are not looking out for what is good but for what is evil. These people do not know gentleness, they lack patience, they love worthless things and pursue money. These people are without mercy for the poor, and do nothing on behalf of the oppressed.
These people do not know who was their Maker.
They are murderers of children, they are corrupters of God's image, they turn away from those in need, oppress the afflicted, are advocates of the wealthy, treat the poor unjustly.
All told, they are full of sin!
Children, may you be kept safe from all this.
- 6.1 Take care that no one leads you astray from this Way of the Teaching, because any other teaching takes you away from God.
- 6.2 Now if you are able to bear the whole of the Lord's yoke, you will be complete. However, if you are not able [to bear that yoke], then do what you can.
- 6.3 And concerning food regulations, bear what you are able. However, you must keep strictly away from meat that has been sacrificed to idols for involvement with it involves worship of dead gods.

- 7.1 With regard to baptism, here is the teaching:
You are to baptize in this way.
Once you have gone back over all that is in the Two Ways, you baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living water.
- 7.2 However, if you do not have access to living water, then baptize in some other water; and if you do not have any cold water, then you can use warm water.
- 7.3 And if you cannot get access to either [running or still water], then pour water three times on the head in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- 7.4 Moreover, before the baptism takes place, let both the person baptizing and the person who is going to be baptized fast – along with as many others as are able to do so. Indeed, you must instruct the person who is going to be baptized to fast for one or two days before the baptism.
- 8.1 You must not let your days of fasting be at the same time as those of the hypocrites. They fast on the second day of the sabbath and on the fifth day of the sabbath, so you should hold your fasts on the fourth day of the sabbath and on the Day of Preparation.
- 8.2 Nor should you offer prayers as the hypocrites do.
Rather, you should pray like this, just as the Lord commanded in his gospel:
Our Father, who is in the heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors
And do not lead us in the trial
But deliver us from evil
For yours is the power and glory for ever.
- 8.3 Say this prayer three times each day.
- 9.1 Now this is how you should engage in giving thanks, bless God in this way.

- 9.2 First, at the cup, say:
We give thanks to you, 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 for ever.
- 9.3 Then when it comes to the broken loaf say:
We give thanks to you, our Father,
for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us.
Through Jesus, your servant, to you be glory for ever.
- 9.4 For as the broken loaf was once scattered over the mountains and then was gathered in and became one, so may your church be gathered together into your kingdom from the very ends of the earth.
Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.
- 9.5 Only let those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord eat and drink at your Eucharists. And remember what the Lord has said about this: do not give to dogs what is holy.
- 10.1 After you all have had enough to eat, give thanks in this way:
10.2 We give you thanks, holy Father, for your holy name which you have made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us.
- 10.3 Through Jesus, your servant, to you be glory for ever.
- 10.3 You are the mighty ruler of all who has created all for your name's sake, and you have given food and drink to human beings for their enjoyment so that they might give thanks to you. But to us, from your generosity, you have given spiritual food and drink, and life eternal, through your servant.
- 10.4 Above all things we give thanks to you because you are mighty: to you be glory for ever.
- 10.5 Remember, Lord, your church, deliver her from evil, make her complete in your love, and gather her from the four winds into your kingdom you have prepared for her, for yours is the power and the glory for ever.

- 10.6 May grace come and may this world pass away.
Hosanna to the God of David.
If anyone is holy, let him advance; if anyone is not, let him be converted.
Maranatha. Amen.
- 10.7 However, permit the prophets to give thanks in whatever manner they wish.
- 11.1 Now, whoever comes to you and teaches all these things which have just been set out here, you are to welcome him.
- 11.2 However, if a teacher has himself wandered from the right path and has begun to teach a teaching that is at odds with what is set out here, you should not listen to him.
On the other hand, if his teaching promotes holiness and knowledge of the Lord, then you should welcome him as you would the Lord.
- 11.3 Now, turning to apostles and prophets you must treat them according to the rule of the gospel.
- 11.4 Every apostle who arrives among you is to be welcomed as if he were the Lord.
- 11.5 But normally he must not stay with you for more than one day, but he may stay a second day if this is necessary. However, if he stays a third day, then he is a false prophet!
- 11.6 When he leaves you, an apostle must receive nothing except enough food to sustain him until the next night's lodgings. However, if he asks for money, then he is a false prophet!
- 11.7 Now if any prophet speaks in the Spirit he is not to be tested: for every sin can be forgiven but this sin cannot be forgiven.
- 11.8 However, not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet: only those who show that they follow the Way of the Lord. It is by the way that he lives that the true prophet can be separated from the false one.
- 11.9 Now if a prophet speaking in the Spirit orders a banquet, then that man should not partake in it; if he does eat the meal, then he is a false prophet.
- 11.10 And any prophet who teaches the truth, but does not live according to his teaching is to be considered a false prophet.

- 11.11 Any prophet, who has been proven to be a true prophet, who acts out in his life the earthly mystery of the church (provided that he does not teach everyone to do as he does) is not to be judged by you: leave his judgement with God. After all, the prophets in olden times also acted in that way.
- 11.12 Now if anyone should say in the Spirit 'Give me money' – or anything like that – you should not listen to that man; however, if he tells you to give something to other people who are in need, then he is not to be condemned.
- 12.1 Now anyone coming in the Lord's name should be made welcome; then you can test him, using your own insight [into human nature] to see if he is genuine or a fraud.
- 12.2 If the visitor is someone who is passing through, help him as much as you can. However, he is not to stay for more than two days – or three out of necessity.
- 12.3 If the visitor wishes to settle in your community, then, if he is a craftsman, he should work for his living.
- 12.4 But if he does not have a trade, then use your own judgement to decide how he is to live among you as a Christian: but he is not to live in idleness.
- 12.5 If he is unhappy with this arrangement, then he is a 'christmonger'. Be on the watch for such people.
- 13.1 Any true prophet who wishes to settle down among you is worthy of his food. In the same way, any true teacher is like a labourer who is worthy of his food.
- 13.2 So take the first fruits of the vine and the harvest, of cattle and sheep, and present these first fruits to the prophets because they are, to you, the high priests.
- 13.3 But if you have no prophet [settled in your community], then give the first fruits to the poor.
- 13.4 When you bake a batch of bread, take the first loaf and present it as it says in the commandment.
- 13.5 Do likewise when you open a fresh flask of wine or oil: take the first portion from it and present it to the prophets.
- 13.6 So also with money and cloth and other commodities: set aside the first fruits, and give it – as much as seems right to you – according to the commandment.

- 14.1 On the day which is the Day of the Lord gather together for the breaking of the loaf and giving thanks. However, you should first confess your sins so that your sacrifice may be a pure one;
- 14.2 and do not let anyone who is having a dispute with a neighbour join until they are reconciled so that your sacrifice may not be impure.
- 14.3 For this is the sacrifice about which the Lord has said: 'In every place and time let a pure sacrifice be offered to me, for I am the great king, says the Lord, and my name is feared among the nations.'
- 15.1 Select for yourselves bishops and deacons: men who are worthy of the Lord, humble, not greedy for money, honest, and well tested, because these too carry out for you the service of the prophets and teachers.
- 15.2 Therefore, you should not despise them but treat them as your honoured men like the prophets and teachers.
Now when you come to correct one another, this is to be done in a composed way, and not in anger, just as you find in the gospel.
- 15.3 And when someone does wrong against his neighbour, let no one speak to him, indeed he is not to hear anything from you, until he repents.
- 15.4 Now with regard to your prayers and almsgiving, indeed all your actions, do them all in the way that you find them prescribed in our Lord's gospel.
- 16.1 Watch over your lives. You must not let your lamps go out, nor should you let your loins be ungirded, rather you should be ready because you do not know the hour at which our Lord is coming.
- 16.2 Gather together frequently and seek those things that are good for your souls. Otherwise what use will having faith over all the time of your life be to you, if at the end of time you are not made perfect.
- 16.3 For in the last days there are going to be many false prophets and those who would corrupt you, then the sheep will turn into wolves, and love will turn into hate.

- 16.4 Then when lawlessness is increasing, people will hate and persecute and be treacherous with one another. Then, indeed, the Deceiver of this world will appear as if a son of God and he will do signs and wonders and the earth will be delivered into his hands and he will commit lawless acts such as have never been seen since the world began.
- 16.5 Then all people will be brought through the trial of fire. Then many will fall away and will perish; but those who stand firm in their faith will be saved by the Cursed One himself.
- 16.6 And then, the signs of the truth will appear:
The first sign will be the heavens opening;
Then [second,] the sound of the trumpet;
And, third, the resurrection of the dead –
16.7 but not of everyone, but as it has been said: 'the Lord will come and all his saints with him.'
- 16.8 Then the world will see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.