



The Book Of Third John

John Encourages

Hospitality

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3 John

OVERVIEW:

Do we see people as objects or inconveniences, or as unique creations of a loving God? And which is more important to God, a person or a carpet? Perhaps the most effective way to demonstrate God's values and Christ's love to others is to invite and welcome guests into our homes.

For Gaius, hospitality was a habit, and his reputation for friendship and generosity, especially to traveling teachers and missionaries (3 John 1:5), had spread. To affirm and thank Gaius for his Christian life—style, and to encourage him in his faith, John wrote this personal note.

John's format for this letter centers around three men—Gaius, the example of one who follows Christ and loves others (3 John 1:1-8); Diotrophes, the self-proclaimed church leader who does not reflect God's values (3 John 1:9-11); and Demetrius, who also follows the truth (3 John 1:12). John encourages Gaius to practice hospitality, continue to walk in the truth, and do what is right.

Although this is a personal letter, we can “look over the shoulder” of Gaius and apply its lessons to our lives. As you read 3 John, with which man do you identify? Are you a Gaius, generously giving to others? A Demetrius, loving the truth? Or a Diotrophes, looking out for yourself and your “things”? Determine to reflect Christ's values in your relationships, opening your home and touching others with his love.

THE BLUEPRINT

John wrote to commend Gaius, who was taking care of traveling teachers and missionaries, and to warn against people like Diotrephes, who was proud and refused to listen to spiritual leaders in authority. If we are to live in the truth of the gospel, we must look for ways to support pastors, Christian workers, and missionaries today. All Christians should work together to support God's work, both at home and around the world.

1. God's children live by the standards of the gospel (3 John 1:1-12)

This letter is from John the Elder.

It is written to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth.

[2] Dear friend, I am praying that all is well with you and that your body is as healthy as I know your soul is. [3] Some of the brothers recently returned and made me very happy by telling me about your faithfulness and that you are living in the truth. [4] I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children live in the truth.

[5] Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God when you take care of the traveling teachers who are passing through, even though they are strangers to you. [6] They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. You do well to send them on their way in a manner that pleases God. [7] For they are traveling for the Lord and accept nothing from those who are not Christians. [8] So we ourselves should support them so that we may become partners with them for the truth.

[9] I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, does not acknowledge our authority. [10] When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the wicked things he is saying about us. He not only refuses to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.

[11] Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not know God. [12] But everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, even truth itself. We ourselves can say the same for him, and you know we speak the truth.

2. John's final words (3 John 1:13-15)

I have much to tell you, but I don't want to do it in a letter. [14] For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face.

[15] May God's peace be with you. Your friends here send you their greetings. Please give my personal greetings to each of our friends there.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Hospitality

EXPLANATION:

John wrote to encourage those who were kind to others. Genuine hospitality for traveling Christian workers was needed then and is still important today.

IMPORTANCE:

Faithful Christian teachers and missionaries need our support. Whenever you can extend hospitality to others, it will make you a partner in their ministry.

THEME: Pride

EXPLANATION:

Diotrephes not only refused to offer hospitality, but he set himself up as a church boss. Pride disqualified him from being a real leader.

IMPORTANCE:

Christian leaders must shun pride and its effects on them. Be careful not to misuse your position of leadership.

THEME: Faithfulness

EXPLANATION:

Gaius and Demetrius were commended for their faithful work in the church. They were held up as examples of faithful, selfless servants.

IMPORTANCE:

Don't take for granted Christian workers who serve faithfully. Be sure to encourage them so they won't grow weary of serving.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.

Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print