

“Walking in Love”

III John

Introduction - We have come to the end of our series in the epistles of John.

- In I John, the apostle discusses fellowship with God.
- In II John, he forbids fellowship with false teachers.
- In III John, he encourages fellowship with Christian brothers and the support of true servants of Jesus Christ.

- Note the contrast between II & III John.

II John - Love, but lacking truth.

III John - Truth, but lacking love.

- III John contains the portraits of three men.

1. Gaius, vv. 1-8

2. Diotrephes, vv. 9-10

3. Demetrius, vv. 11-12

- Gaius - The Encourager! He loved others.
- Diotrephes - The Dictator! He loved himself.
- Demetrius - The Good Example. Others loved him.

Lesson from these portraits:

- The kind of Christian's they were.
- The church members they were.
- The church workers and leaders.

I. Gaius - The Encourager, vv. 1-8

John loved Gaius. *What Pastor wouldn't love to have Gaius in his congregation?*

1. He had spiritual maturity, vs. 2. (Health & wealth teachers. Ken Copeland & Joel Osteen). We can be strong spiritually and at the same time weak physically. **Illus.** - Paul's thorn. II Corinthians 4:16, "*Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*"

2. He had a good testimony, vv. 3-4. *Why?* Because of God's truth!

A. The truth was in him, vs. 3

- He read God's word!
- He meditated on God's Word! (Ps. 1)

B. He walked in truth, vs. 4.

- *"True living comes from the living truth."*
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.
- He was a *"doer of the word."*

3. He had faithful ministry, vv. 5-8.

- Spiritual maturity.
- A good testimony.

We see the marks and motive for ministry. Also why we should support true ministry.

A. Seek to honor God, vs. 7, *"for His name sake."* It's not for self-glory or for our own needs.

B. Seeks to witness to the lost, vs. 7. *"They went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles."* **Illus.** - Gen. 14, *Abraham said no to the King of Sodom....give me the persons, and take the goods.*

C. Obedience to God, vs. 8a.

Note the contrast, vs. 8, *"We" therefore ought to receive such*" The New Living Translation, *"So we ourselves should support them."* God's people "ought" to support God's work! (The local church)

D. Fellow helpers to the truth, vs. 8b.

T.N.L.T - *"So we ourselves should support them, so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth."*

Illus. Phil. 4:17, *"Fruit to your account."* **Note** lesson, to those who would like to be in full time Christian work! Note the contrast with II John 10-11.

"It is one thing to fight apostasy and refuse to entertain false teachers, but quite another thing to open our homes (and wallets) to promote the truth. We need both the negative and the positive. We need more people like Gaius who are spiritually healthy, obedient to the Word, and sharing what they have for the furtherance of the truth." - Warren W. Wiersbe

But sadly, not everyone in the church is a Gaius.

II. Diotrephes the Dictator, vv. 9-10.

He's the man who loved to be first! (vs. 9)

Illus. Mat. 18:1 - Who's the greatest in the kingdom? Answer - "Jesus called a little child."

I Peter 5, "*Neither as being Lord's over God's heritage, but examples.*" It's sad when carnal men get into ministry. Today's model, C.E.O. It should be Jesus! Phil. 2 & John 13.

Note - The marks of an unhealthy church member.

1. He would not receive John, vs. 9b.
 - Why? He felt threatened.
 - Today's leaders reject God's word.
2. He lied about John, vs. 10a.

"Prating against us with us malicious words."

 - Satan always attacks God's servants.
 - Sadly people believe it. They don't go to the pastor to get the truth. Phil. 4:8, "*Whatever is true....honest...*"
3. He rejected John's associates, vs. 10b. N.L.T. "*He refuses to welcome the traveling teachers.*"
4. He disciplined those who disagreed with him, vs. 10c.

How to spot a church dictator.

1. They talk about themselves and what they have done for the Lord.
2. They judge and condemn others. Matt. 7
3. They love to label other Christians.
4. They base their fellowship on personalities.

And sadly, very immature and untaught believers follow these. Proudful, self-seeking leaders. So, don't follow them.

III. Demetrius, The Good Example, vv. 11-12

Don't follow or imitate the evil, imitate the good, vs. 11.

The test. How to know who's of God? (vs. 11b)

- The moral test - Obedience
- The social test - Love
- The doctrinal test - Truth, Jesus!

Note his good example, vs. 12.

1. Good report of all men, vs. 12.
2. "And for all truth," vs. 12.
3. and of John, vs. 12.

IV. The Conclusion, vv. 13-14

Peace even in the storms.

The message of II & III John:

1. Standing in Truth
2. Laboring in Love