



Bible Study

3 John

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3 John is one of the shortest letters in the Bible. It is written to Gaius, who John refers to as a dear friend, four times. He expresses his joy upon hearing about Gaius's faithfulness to the truth and he has a clear message for the church.

John's Apostolic Heart

We are reminded of the apostolic heart of John. When we think of apostolic work, it is usually Paul who comes to mind but John also had a heart for the church and in the book of Revelation, Jesus gave him a spectacular vision of the future, with important messages for the 7 churches in Asia.

Christian Friendship

"To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth." The foundation and basis of this friendship was, very simply, the truth of the gospel. It was the knowledge of God's love, expressed through Jesus' death and resurrection, that brought them into friendship. Whatever other affinity they may have, this is the rock on which they stand, solid truth, Jesus!

Physical and Spiritual Health

John's desire for physical health to accompany spiritual health is very significant. John is confident that Gaius is in a good place as far as his soul is concerned but he also prays for Gaius to be well in his body. We know that our spiritual well-being is of first importance but our body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, needs to be fit and well to maximise the opportunity to serve God. John prays for Gaius, knowing that many things can afflict our bodies. A wise lifestyle needs to accompany our spiritual zeal.

Faithfulness

John's dear friend, Gaius, has been faithful in the body of Christ. When the church received visitors, who came and shared ministry to encourage and strengthen the body of Christ, Gaius welcomed them, looked after them and supported them. Diotrephes had a different attitude. He loved to be first and he rejected the ministry of John and others outside of his local church. Of course, we must resist evil and be wise. Not every visitor is from God and we must protect God's people from those who come as wolves in sheep's clothing. However, Diotrephes was a gossip, whose love of self, had led him into unfaithfulness and evil.

Walking in the Truth

John instructs and exhorts his dear friend to imitate what is good and not that which is evil. Good comes from God and if our friendship with Him is strong, then we will also do what is good and be a blessing, rather than a hindrance, to the body of Christ. In contrast to the unhelpful attitude of Diotrephes, John now commends Demetrius, who is respected by everyone because he walks in the truth of God's word. Praise the Lord for such people!

True Friendship

It is good when people can see the work of Christ in our lives. John knows that it is helpful to write but that face-to-face contact is so much better. Our heavenly Father longs for us to reveal Him to our friends and the love of Jesus is the key to true friendship!

Points to Consider:

1. Is the truth of the gospel at the heart of our friendships?
2. Do we look after our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit or do we just take them for granted?
3. Are we faithful, like Gaius and Demetrius, or do we behave like Diotrephes?
4. Do we welcome other Christians or reject them?
5. Do we know God as a friend or just obey His instructions as a servant?