

A Study on 3 John

¹The Elder, to Gaius, *my* dear friend, whom I truly love.

²Dear friend, I pray that in every way things may go well with you and that you may be healthy - just as *I have heard that* things are going well with your soul. ³For it filled me with great joy when *Christian* brothers came, and told *me* about the truth that is in you - the truth in which you continue to live. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my *spiritual* children continue to live in the truth.

⁵Dear friend, you have been faithful in what you have done for the *Christian* brothers, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way, in a manner worthy of God. ⁷It was for his name's sake that they went out, receiving no financial help from those who do not know God. ⁸We, therefore, ought to help them, so that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

⁹I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to put himself first, will not pay attention to what we say. ¹⁰So if I visit, I will point out what he is doing, spreading false rumors about us. Not satisfied with that, he not only refuses to welcome the *Christian* brothers, but also tries to stop others from doing so, expelling them out of the church.

¹¹Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does what is good is from God; he who does what is evil has not seen God. ¹²Everyone speaks well of Demetrius; the truth itself speaks well of him. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³I have many things to say to you, but am unwilling to do so with pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends *here* greet you. Greet the friends there by name.

STUDY QUESTIONS

v. 1-2

- Looking at the context (v. 1-4), what is John's primary concern in his opening statements?
- Compare/contrast *his* emphasis with what is prevalent today.

v. 3-4

- What brings John joy? (See also: 2 John 1:4.) Why does it bring him joy?
- Using this passage, along with the other books written by John, what is involved in his concept of "truth"? (Selected verses might include: John 1:14,17; 8:32,44; 14:6,17; 16:13; 17:17; 18:37; 1 John 1:6,8; 2:4,8,20,21; 3:18,19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 John 1:1-4; 3 John 1:8,12.)

v. 5-6

- How did John encourage Gaius?
- How did Gaius have an impact on the lives of others? How might *we* (in our own circumstances) follow Gaius' example of expressing love and faithfulness?
- Compare or contrast Gaius' attitude toward others with the attitudes that are common in the world around us.

v. 7-8

- See also 2 John 1:9-11. In both of these passages, what is our obligation? Why? What is the end result?
- (You may wish to discuss examples of individuals being "sent out," and other people's obligations to such individuals. A few suggested references are: Mark 6:7-13; Acts 13:2-3; Romans 16:23; 1 Peter 4:8-10.)

v. 9-10

- Compare the attitude of Gaius (v. 5-6) with that of Diotrophes. What is the motivating factor for each? (Alternate question: Who or what does each of them love and serve?) How does this motivating factor (*or* person/thing being loved/served) manifest itself in their actions? What are the results (short term/long term) of such actions?

- What do other verses in the Bible say about these attitudes?
- How could *we* (in our own circumstances) fall into the trap of expressing the same type of attitude that Diotrephes had? What can we do to make sure it doesn't happen?

v. 11

- The message of v. 11a occurs in many other passages. (A few such passages include: Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 10:6; 11:1; 15:13; etc.) Using these (and similar verses), discuss right and wrong ways to use people (or things) as examples that we can "imitate." (Include how we can know the *difference* between these right and wrong ways to use examples.)
- Read Matthew 7:15-23; Galatians 5:19-23; James 1:22-25 (and any other verses you may wish to include from James and 1 John). Discuss the *differences* and *similarities* that may exist, between one's "fruit" and what is in his "heart." If possible, discuss the *relationship* between the two. (Support your statements with Scripture.)

v. 12

- Nothing is mentioned about Demetrius' background. He may have been one of the "Christian brothers" who was coming to visit the church (compare with v. 5-6) - perhaps being sent by John with this letter. Obviously, he had a good reputation.
- How great was this reputation? According to Scripture, how does a person get such a reputation? (What is his motivation or attitude? Is he *trying* to get such a reputation?) In answering this question, perhaps a good place to start might be with these verses: Mark 9:33-37; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; James 3:13-18.

v. 13

- Of all the things John *could* have written about, what are some possible reasons that God led him to select *this* topic for writing? (Example: How does its message fill a unique need that God's people might have?)

v. 14

- What type of attitude toward others is seen in v. 14? What can we learn from it?

QUESTION FOR THE WHOLE BOOK:

- The two greatest commands are summarized in Matthew 22:34-40. How are these commands exemplified (shown by example) in 3 John?