



# WEDNESDAY EVENING

## AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

**Title:** Give or Take

**Passage:** III John 1:1-14

**Speaker:** Associate Pastor David Wood

**Introduction:** In this brief letter, John paints a clear contrast between two men—Gaius the giver and Diotrephes the taker. One opened his hands; the other closed his heart. One walked in truth; the other twisted it for his own pride. One built up the work of God; the other tore it down. The question we each have to answer is simple but searching: which one am I becoming? May we, like Gaius, be known for our faithfulness when it's hard, our generosity when it costs, and our sincerity when no one's watching. Because when we live that way, we don't just make an impact—we shine as “fellowhelpers to the truth,” bringing joy to others and glory to Christ.

### I. The Giver - Gaius (Verses 1-8)

#### 1. Faithfulness

##### A. Faithfulness isn't always easy.

How often do we give ourselves a pass from helping others because we are so focused on our own world?

We know what we should do in reaching out to help someone and we even make plans. But year after year, we look back and we haven't helped like we should for a multitude of reasons.

*“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)*



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B. Faithfulness is always worth it.

Your faithfulness to attend church, your kindness to others, your service to the Lord even when you don't feel like it, means more than anything! Just keep on going!

*"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Hebrews 6:10)*

2. Generosity

A. Generosity isn't about abundance.

*"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

Cheerful generosity isn't measured by the size of the gift—it's measured by the size of the heart behind it.

B. Generosity is about Obedience.

Let's not be guilty of convenient Christianity. Wearing the name but not willing to allow God to interfere in our lives and make us uncomfortable.

Gaius is an example of obediently being generous and we ought to be the same.

3. Sincerity

*"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24)*

Let's be people that sincerely and simply want the gospel message to be proclaimed.

Don't do things to get noticed. Do things because they are right. Do things because they are needed.



## II. The Taker - Diotrephes (Verses 9-10)

### A. Proud

The greatest danger to any ministry or believer is pride — wanting recognition more than righteousness.

*“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18)*

### B. Rebellious

*“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...” (Hebrews 13:17)*

Rebellion always masquerades as strength — but in reality, it's weakness hiding behind ego.

### C. Harmful

Prideful people don't just hurt themselves; they hurt the work of God and the people around them.

*“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” (Philippians 2:3)*

**Conclusion:** And now the story turns to Demetrius—the messenger standing at Gaius's door, letter in hand, heart full of hope. He's praying that Gaius hasn't changed, that the noise of Diotrephes' pride hasn't silenced his faithfulness. The knock sounds, the door opens, and Gaius is faced with a choice: to close his heart or to open his hands once again. We don't know exactly what happened—but we do know this letter was kept, cherished, and passed down. That tells us Gaius stayed true. So the question comes to us: Who's knocking on your door? Who needs your help, your encouragement, your generosity, your faithfulness? The choice stands the same today as it did then—will you be the Giver, or the Taker?



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