

III John– 5 October 2025

“Motivating Others Toward Truth”

Introduction

- *Short letters aren't throwaways, but packed w/ power

- *Pascal said, “If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter” – Power in short letters

- *Preachers, good & bad, travelled all around

- *This was so prevalent, early Christians compiled the Didache from 50-120 AD

- *Part of it called “Two Ways” shows the way of life and the way of death to know whether to take a travelling preacher as true or false prophet

- *Basically, if he was being selfish they're false & if they're humble & giving they're of the Lord

- *Interesting b/c II & III John are about following truth

- *II John helps us stay away from false teachers

- *III John helps us recognize godly teachers

- *Here we're instructed to help others toward the truth

Today, we'll see 4 ways to uplift & motivate others in their walk with the Lord

#1 – Rejoice together over godly truth (Vs 1-4)

Read Vs 1

1. Apostle John, writing in late 80s or early 90s
 - a. All other Apostles were w/ the Lord
 - b. This is why he's well-known as the Elder
2. Gaius was probably the most common name
 - a. At least 4 men named Gaius in the Bible
 - b. Seems to be a specific man since the words “beloved” & “thou/you” in vs 2 are singular
3. *In truth* doesn't mean it's true John loves him
 - a. It means that John & Gaius are *in the truth*
 - i. Word *truth* isn't an adverb, but a dative noun
 - ii. Same usage in John 4:23-24 & I John 3:18
 - b. When we're both “in Christ” our relationship has a guideline, a goal and gravitas

Read Vs 2

1. John wishes him material blessing even while emphasizing the spiritual blessings

2. John wishes him to prosper “in all ways”
 - a. It’s not intended to carry the meaning that the physical is “above” all most important
 - b. It means John wishes him to have a well-rounded life of success
3. We should want those that are walking in God’s truth to succeed in all ways even more than unbelievers
 - a. Read Gal 6:10 – we prioritize believers for our physical helps & our spiritual help without neglecting anyone

Read Vs 3-4

1. Love & truth are John’s prevailing themes in his gospel & his 3 letters
 - a. There’s no greater way to bring joy to a teacher, mentor, father, mother, elder or big brother than that you follow the instruction & example that they gave
 - b. Caring for their physical weakness, or respecting them by giving your time to listen to them isn’t nearly as honoring to them as obeying what they taught

2. The Lord Jesus is calling for our response
 - a. To hear and not act on it is to completely miss the point of even hearing it
 - b. To read your Bible & not act on it is to completely mis the point of reading it
3. Now we should use these verses on each other
 - a. Tell your older mentor or younger friend of it

#2 – Support them with money (Vs 5-8)

Read Vs 5-6

1. Gaius is commended for using his money for the advancement of travelling Christian teachers
2. We're all entrusted w/ resources
 - a. Will we be faithful to use them only for the glory of God (Read I Cor 4:2)

Read Vs 7-8

1. The church should look for support from the greater church not from the world of unbelievers
2. Oh, God might compel unbelievers to give to the Church, but we don't ever need to ask for it

- a. The church isn't servant to the world's supply
 - b. The church is empowered by God's supply
 - c. Community potlucks & yard sales show reliance on the world and not on God
 - d. Never be forced to obey the world b/c they're giving your money (i.e. 501(c)3)
3. Our Pastor Chuck always said, 'Where God guides, God provides'
- a. And God provides thru His people & thru His people's efforts

#3 – Declare the division between those walking in truth & those walking in darkness (Vs 9-11)

Read Vs 9-10

- 1. Diotrephes was making bad decisions for his local church
 - a. Not accept travelling Christians to the extent of punishing those that do help
 - b. Exalting himself as something special
 - c. Speaking badly about the Apostle John

2. So John calls him out publicly
 - a. This is in keeping w/ love, not against love
 - b. Read Rom 16:17 – Paul even called out Peter once (i.e. Gal 2:11)
 - c. To slightly wound Diotrephes is to love the church that was being led wrongly by him

Read Vs 11

1. John gave good example of Gaius & the bad example of Diotrephes, then said, follow the good
 - a. In other words, the choice is clear, do it
2. If you're living a bad example, this means you haven't spent enough time with Jesus
 - a. Read Act 4:13 – Be transformed by the renewing of our mind, to know God's will for each day

#4 – Show them your heart (Vs 12-15)

Read Vs 12

1. There's another Demetrius in Act 19, we don't know if this is the same man, probably not
2. Most likely Demetrius is the one who carried this letter from John to Gaius
3. So he is part of the blessing that John imparts to Gaius for the short season that he'll be there

Read Vs 13-14

1. John has a deep desire to interact more
 - a. Not just to monologue but to dialogue
 - b. Not just to speak his mind, but to give his heart
2. The one that is content with only having distance correspondence is missing this heart
 - a. Distance cannot carry the warmth of being present w/ the church
3. I can sympathize with John's desire not to write but simply to come, however, I'm glad we have this record

Read Vs 15

1. Though this is a letter addressing contention, John continues to point them to the goal of peace
2. Though they must deal with Diotrefes, John reminds them that they have many brothers & sisters working together for the cause of Christ

Conclusion

What about you? Have you ever written a letter just to motivate & encourage a friend to follow Jesus?

Let's use our time w/ each other such things...

1. **Let's rejoice together over godly truth**
2. **Let's support others with our money**
3. **Let's let of the division between those living for the Lord & those that are not**
4. **Let's show our heart & compassion**

Is there someone that each of us should go talk with today!!!