

That You May Know — 3 John 1:1-15

In this letter John is writing to a very special friend and church member Gaius who is supporting and showing great hospitality to missionaries and evangelists to the church. John is commending him and celebrating Gaius. John clearly sees him as a friend and is excited to see what he is doing for the Kingdom. John condemns Diotrephes and his arrogance and that he is harming the Kingdom. Diotrephes is being more of a “church boss” allowing his ego and attitude to bring harm to the church. He is talking ugly of John and also kicking the missionaries out of the church. This section is capped off by the celebration of Demetrius who is considered a model for other Christians by walking in the truth and loving through the Word.

Discussion questions — *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. Gaius was commended by John for having the reputation for being very hospitable and helping the “strangers.” The hospitality of that time and culture was a very big deal because hotels and inns were not that great and could be dangerous. Gaius is providing for their needs and helping them. How important is hospitality in the Christian faith and the church? Why? Is that something we continue to value today?
2. Gaius was helping the missionaries or potentially the traveling evangelists and teachers. Not all of us are called, nor able to go ourselves, but we are clearly called to support those who go. This can be through finances or prayer. Who is someone you know that is a Gaius in the church or someone you have known in your past? How often do you pray for those who are sent? What can you do to grow in this area?
3. John gives a strong condemnation to Diotrephes. This letter was written over 2,000 years ago and is just as applicable today as it was then. All pastors through the ages have had to watch out for the “Diotrephes” of the world. There is a clear progression – **arrogance** (pride) which fuels rejection of **authority** which leads to **actions** of harm. In this case it was gossiping and slandering the apostle John and ultimately kicking the missionaries out of the church and pulling people away. Diotrephes was acting like a “church boss.” This is clearly harmful to the church but has proven to be a consistent pattern through which Satan uses to bring harm to the faith family. Why is this such a big deal to John? How have you been a Diotrephes in the past? When are you tempted to let your ego and arrogance fuel rejection of the authority that God places over you? In family, work, or church? How does John deal with this situation? What can we do to make sure this type of harmful situation does not take place or how can we keep it from spreading?

4. Demetrius was a breath of fresh air. He had a positive and glowing report from the other believers and from the Word itself. His life could be tested by the Bible and would definitely pass the test. His reputation was built on doing what God commanded him to do. Many folks work on their reputation and desire to be seen as someone good and moral. However, it's just the outside show not the inside source. How can we model after Demetrius in our own life? Who is someone you have seen that is worth being a model in your own life? Maybe take some time and thank God for them or better yet send them a text or phone call and thank them for their impact on your life.
5. Pray for someone you know who needs to be rescued by Christ. Pray for the churches and pastors that are dealing with a Diotrephes type situation right now. Pray for the protection of the congregation from the evil one. Pray for the leaders to be strong to deal with this evil work. Pray that churches will be able to heal if they are dealing with the results of this type of person.