



## **Treat Faithful Christians as Family**

*3 John 1:5-15*

**Main Point:** As family, give support to those who are faithfully doing the work of the gospel.

**It is a faithful thing to show hospitality to those doing the work of the gospel (5-8).**

- *You give a testimony that brings encouragement to others (5-6a).*
- *You are a part of God's provision to his servants doing his work (6b-7).*
- *You become a fellow worker through the gift of your support (8).*

In John's second letter, he warned the church about the dangers of showing hospitality to false teachers. To those who teach opinions and traditions that do not align to God's Word and distort the true gospel of Jesus Christ, John told the church to not even allow them into their homes so that they avoid taking part in their wicked works. Now, John has to address the issue of those on the other extreme. There were some in the early church who were acting in selfishness and arrogance such that they were refusing to show hospitality – welcome into their homes and churches – to those who were faithful servants of the gospel! In the time of the early church, there were many missionaries or itinerant workers, who were taking the gospel to the people and places who needed the gospel. These missionaries depended on the hospitality of the church to provide for their needs as they traveled from place to place. They also served as a great encouragement to the local churches as they shared their testimonies about the work of the Lord that they had seen in their travels. Gaius was one of those people who had faithfully welcomed these brothers into his home and had provided the support they needed to move forward in the work of the gospel. John praised Gaius for this faithfulness. Gaius' example was an encouragement to others, and Gaius' support was a part of God's provision to his servants for doing his work. In fact, through Gaius' support, he had become a fellow worker in the work of these servants of the Lord. It is a faithful thing to show hospitality to those doing the work of the gospel!

1. Why is 2 John so important in rightly understanding how to apply 3 John? What's the thing that is essential in order to accept someone's testimony as a true teacher or brother in Christ?
2. We don't have itinerant missionaries in our context as much any more, but what are some modern applications of this in our church? How does this apply to guests at our church from other places and churches? How does it apply to prospective members?
3. What are some ways as Southern Baptists that we cooperate together and help support those doing the work of the gospel? How does our giving to the Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, etc. give support? How does giving through these means make us at FBC St. Francisville fellow workers in all that gospel work?

**It is a selfish thing to fail to show hospitality to those doing the work of the gospel (9-10).**

- *It's arrogant to discount and disparage a faithful servant of the gospel (9-10a).*
- *It's selfish not to show hospitality to faithful servants or those who support them (10b).*

In contrast to Gaius, there was Diotrephes. We don't know much about this man, only what John wrote in this letter. He was a leader of some in the local church where Gaius served, and while he could have been a false teacher, it appears that his problem had more to do with arrogance and selfishness. As John stated, Diotrephes liked "to put himself first." He had ignored a letter that John had written to the church, discounting the apostle and his authority in the early church. Diotrephes had also talked bad about John and other brothers to the church. John called his words "wicked nonsense." The way Diotrephes discounted and disparaged the apostle John would have been enough, but in selfishness, Diotrephes opposed anyone who showed any connection to John. He refused to welcome faithful servants of the gospel, and for those who did welcome such servants, Diotrephes even put some of them out of the church! What's the key here? These weren't false teachers. These were brothers who were faithfully walking in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were brothers who were faithful in the teaching of Christ, which John himself witnessed and was commissioned by the Lord Jesus to continue to teach and preach. There was no legitimate, biblical cause for not showing hospitality to these brothers. The only reason was illegitimate jealousy stemming from an arrogant and selfish heart. Was Diotrephes a false teacher? Perhaps he was based on John's next words in verses 11-12, but it's also possible that he was a believer who had fallen into the trap of arrogance and selfishness in his heart. Either way, it is a selfish thing to fail to show hospitality to those doing the work of the gospel.

1. In 2 John, do you see any characteristics of a false teacher in Diotrephes? Do believers also struggle with arrogance and selfishness?
2. In 2 John, it's correct to identify and warn against false teachers, so what's different here? Why is Diotrephes' discounting and opposition sinful?
3. In 2 John, believers were warned to not even allow a false teacher into their home. So what's critical in evaluating who we can trust or not? How do we do this?

**Walk faithfully in the love and truth of the Lord (11-12).**

- *Imitate good and not evil (11).*
- *Walking faithfully is easy to see: It's a life that aligns to God's truth (12).*

What does faithfully walking in the truth look like? That's actually pretty easy to answer. John answered it in a command to Gaius: Don't imitate evil; imitate good! How do we know what's good? Just look to the Lord God! He and he alone is good. All his ways are righteous and just. All his words are true. Whoever does good is "from God." Whoever does evil – this is what identifies their lives – has not seen God. John then points to an example of someone else who has done good, which was Demetrius. John had a good testimony of Demetrius from others, and the truth itself backed up Demetrius testimony! In other words, his words and life were an imitation of good: The Lord God as revealed through his Word. John reinforced the validity of his testimony as well, which was grounded in the truth. In other words, John said if you want to test my words and test Demetrius' testimony, then just look to the Word of God. Walking faithfully in the love and truth of the Lord looks like a life that's aligned to God's truth!

1. How do you know what good is? How can we imitate good? Is this possible by our strength and effort? What's needed in our lives to imitate the Lord?
2. Encourage one another. How are you imitating good? Pray for each other. Ask for the Lord's protection and growth of Christ in your hearts and minds. O that we would imitate God more-and-more in the faithfulness of our walk!