

III JOHN: The Beloved Gaius

“The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius...”

III John 1:1

Introduction:

1. The second epistle was to an elect lady in the truth, and the third one is to a beloved man in the truth.
2. Whenever we open the inspired Scriptures, we should savor every word, even from minor epistles, for every word of God is pure and profitable for our spiritual growth (Ps 12:6-7; Prov 30:5; Luke 4:4).
3. Every man must ask himself if he is worthy of such affection and concern by the beloved apostle.
4. Your pastor greatly desires that there will be many elect men to follow this holy and noble example.

EXPOSITION

A. The apostle John wrote a godly man named Gaius, whom he and others loved (1:1).

1. We know the author is the beloved apostle by the title of the epistle and the writing style.
2. There are several Gaius's in the New Testament, but we cannot prove certain connection.
3. This Gaius was a dear and beloved friend of John, and he loved him well in the truth.
4. As with John's love of the elect lady, the basis for great love is the truth (II John 1:1-2).

B. John's great desire for Gaius was for his health and finances to match his soul (1:2).

1. Here is how personal affection is stated between great saints of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Obviously, Gaius was an exceptional man, for John had no desire for his prospering soul!
3. Gaius had his priorities in the right place: he had put his soul first in life (Luke 12:15-21).
4. Prayer for health and financial success can only be made with passion for the very godly!
5. God only wants to bless a man with health and money who has put his soul first in life.
6. When Solomon asked for wisdom, God gave him the rest of life's goodies (I Kgs 3:5-14)!

C. John had joyfully heard from others about the godly reputation of this noble saint (1:3).

1. True Christian charity rejoices to see and hear others walking in the truth (I Cor 13:6).
2. Building your reputation in the gospel is a goal and a choice of great men (Prov 22:1).
3. It is one thing to believe you are faithful; it is another for others to believe it (Prov 20:6).
4. The truth is the gospel of Christ and word of God dwelling in a man and changing him.
5. There is no profit in hearing, believing, or professing (Jas 1:21-25; Jas 2:14-26; I Jn 2:4).
6. The key is walking (John 8:30-32; Eph 4:1-3; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-11; I Thess 2:10-13).
7. There are many that profess Christ, but walk as the enemies of Christ (Phil 3:18-19).

D. John's greatest joy was to know that his Christian converts were living the truth (1:4).

1. We understand children here to be John's Christian converts (Gal 4:19; I John 2:1; 3:18).
2. Lip service means nothing to a true minister of God; he wants the life (Ezek 33:30-33).
3. This should also be the greatest joy of biological parents (Prov 23:15-16,24-25; 27:11).

E. John commends and praises Gaius for his faithful care and hospitality of all saints (1:5).

1. Many serve clumsily, grudgingly, partially, selfishly, sporadically, slowly, stingily, etc.
2. But both church members and strangers testified of the faithful charity of Gaius to all.
3. Gaius was conscientious about charity, not just to local church members, but to strangers.
4. Consider how the Lord directs charity to strangers (Mat 10:40-42; I Tim 5:10; Heb 13:2).
5. The Lord knows when you eat out or show hospitality to your friends (Luke 14:12-14).

F. Both church members and strangers testified of Gaius's outstanding charity (1:6).

1. Both local brethren and strangers had testified before the church of his excellent works.
2. Though excelling in this grace, John exhorts Gaius to support traveling preachers (1:7-8).
3. How do you serve a minister after a godly sort? As if you were doing it to God Himself.

4. You have no right to think yourself charitable and kind without testimonies (Prov 18:24).
- G. The Jewish preachers that Gaius entertained had evangelized the Gentiles freely (1:7).**
1. Honest and true ministers of the gospel are in their office for the sake of Jesus Christ.
 2. Following Paul, his successors evangelized freely as well (Acts 20:33-35; I Cor 9:1-19).
 3. Paul used this very argument to encourage the Gentiles to give to the Jews (Rom 15:27).
 4. This does not negate at all the ordinance of the gospel that ministers should be supported full-time by their home churches (I Cor 9:14; I Tim 4:13-15; 5:17-18; II Tim 2:4).
- H. Helping ministers preach the gospel is a means for those not called to participate (1:8).**
1. Other saints should help those men who have sacrificed their own lives to serve Christ.
 2. Even though you may not be called yourself, you can participate in helping the truth.
 3. Here is one of the great reasons to work hard and make as much as is reasonably possible.
- I. The church of Gaius had a proud tyrant named Diotrephes rejecting preachers (1:9).**
1. John had resorted to a private epistle, because this evil man had rejected the apostles.
 2. Any false teacher wanting a position of influence had to resent and resist the apostles!
 3. It is a terrible blight on the churches of Jesus Christ when proud men get in the ministry.
 4. Remember the reasons for never ordaining novices, lest they fall into this sin (I Tim 3:6).
 5. God's ministers must be servants and examples to their flocks, not lords (I Peter 5:1-4).
- J. John promised to correct the situation with Diotrephes, if he were able to visit (1:10).**
1. The apostles had authority and power far superior to saints or ministers (Acts 5:12-13).
 2. It is one thing to overlook personal offences, but sins against Christ are quite different.
 3. Prating is the longwinded, insolent, boastful, and officious chatter and babbling of a fool.
 4. Great care should be used in criticizing ministers (Num 16:1-3; II Kgs 2:23; I Tim 5:19).
 5. Diotrephes rejected the traveling preachers and anyone who attempted to serve them.
- K. John exhorted Gaius to follow goodness, for it is the evidence of knowing God (1:11).**
1. There will be good and bad examples; we should always choose the good (Phil 3:17-21).
 2. Whether you do good or evil is the evidence whether you have a relationship with God.
 3. Good is measured by the spiritual quality and quantity of your speech and your actions.
- L. In contrast to the evil of Diotrephes, John raised the good example of Demetrius (1:12).**
1. Here is a man that conducted himself to be free of offence by all good men and the truth.
 2. The truth of the gospel can commend and give a good report when a man lives by it.
 3. John added that he and the believers with him knew of the great character of Demetrius.
 4. The apostles esteemed Demetrius, and Gaius could certainly trust their judgment of him.
- M. Though John had many things to write, he resolves to reserve the rest for a visit (1:13).**
1. The curiosity of some will make them wonder what other things John wanted to say.
 2. The wisdom of others will realize that what is written was important and chosen by God.
- N. John intended to visit Gaius, so he gave a blessing and exchanged salutations (1:14).**
1. As with the elect lady in the second epistle, John preferred a face-to-face visit of friends.
 2. Peace is a great blessing, for most live without it (Is 57:21). Christ has won peace for us.
 3. The friends of the gospel that were with John saluted Gaius, an eminent saint of Christ.
 4. John asked Gaius to express his greetings by name to the dear saints that were with him.

APPLICATION

- A. To be loved by good men is a great goal and result of a godly life (Proverbs 22:1; Luke 2:52).
- B. The truth is the best and only criterion that should govern our friendships (1:1; Ps 119:63).
- C. Health and finances follow the soul (1:2; Ps 37:4; Haggai 1:1-11; Matt 6:33; I Cor 11:28-32).
- D. A good reputation is a choice and the honest evidence of godliness (1:3; Pr 18:24; 22:1,11).

- E. Our great goal and pleasure for one another should be to walk in the truth (1:3-4; I Cor 13:6).
- F. Walking in the truth is key, where it alters all your thinking, speaking, actions, and habits.
- G. Faithful charity spread wide is a mark of a great man, given to hospitality (1:5; Rom 12:13).
- H. Charity to strangers is godliness (1:5; Matt 10:40-42; Acts 16:14-15; I Tim 5:10; Heb 13:2).
- I. Commendation and praise is part of the gospel (1:5; Rom 16:1-4; II Cor 8:18; Phil 2:19-23).
- J. If you do not know what strangers to entertain, choose some poor brethren (Luke 14:12-14).
- K. Public testimony of charity by a godly man does not negate secret giving (1:6; Matt 6:1-4).
- L. Godly charity must be done liberally, humbly, cheerfully, privately, etc. (1:6; Prov 11:24).
- M. Ministers should be esteemed in their work and lovingly compensated (1:7; I Thess 5:12-13).
- N. Helping ministers preach the truth is a great goal for earning (1:8; Romans 15:24; Eph 4:28).
- O. Preeminence by any man, especially ministers, is the blight of any church (1:9; Phil 2:1-11).
- P. Naming sinners is part of the gospel, in spite of effeminate compromisers (1:9; I Tim 1:20).
- Q. Malicious prating against the ministers and saints of God will bring His judgment (1:10).
- R. Love and defense of the gospel will not tolerate men like Diotrephes (1:10; Titus 1:9-14).
- S. There is separation that is good (II Cor 6:17). And there is separation that is evil (Jude 1:19).
- T. There is no evidence of eternal life and relationship with God without doing good (1:11).
- U. The examples of good men should be followed; those of evil men should be hated (1:11).
- V. If you do not have a wise report of men, ministers, and the truth, you are a loser (1:12).
- W. Friendship outside the gospel is not much friendship at all (1:14; Prov 17:17; Amos 3:3).
- X. The kingdom of Jesus Christ creates a secret society invisible to the world of great friends.

Conclusion:

1. This epistle shows the personal nature of the New Testament and the praise of individual godly men.
2. All boys and men should examine and measure themselves by the character and praise of Gaius.