

A Commendation and a Denunciation 3 John

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers should imitate the godly example of Gaius.
2. Believers should not imitate the ungodly example of Diotrephes.

Practical Application

1. Would you want 3 John 2 prayed for you?

Questions

1. 3 John is the shortest of the three epistles of John. True or False?
2. John is the shortest book in the New Testament. True or False?
3. How does the apostle John refer to himself in this epistle? What does this mean?
4. To whom is this epistle written?
5. In 2 John we learned that believer should not show hospitality to false teachers. In 3 John we learn that believers should show hospitality, but to whom?
6. Who was Demetrius (2 John 12)?

Answers

1. True.
2. True.
3. As the elder, which can refer to age or to spiritual position, or to both.
4. To Gaius, a Christian who is highly commended in this letter.
5. In the early church there were traveling evangelists and teachers, and believers were expected to show hospitality to these itinerant servants of the Lord, who were true teachers of the word of God.
6. Demetrius was one of these traveling preachers, highly commended by John as a beloved brother.

Discuss / Consider

1. Gaius had a good testimony from his fellow believers. He showed Christian hospitality to the traveling evangelists and teachers of the first century and helped them on their way. Are you imitating the godly model of Gaius? How do you respond when you hear about the needs of fellow believers, whether you know them personally or not? Are you willing to share what you have with others? Are you willing to open your home?

2. Diotrophes loved to have the pre-eminence. He had an exaggerated opinion of himself and of his own importance. He was a power-hungry Christian who made himself the leader of the church he attended. Any fellow believer that got in his way was slandered and even excommunicated. He not only did not receive the traveling servants of the Lord, but he took those who did help and put them out of the church. He was an ungodly, micromanaging control freak consumed with the sins of pride and jealousy. There are men like Diotrophes today, but God will deal with those who put themselves above church discipline. Do you know of a Diotrophes in a church today? Be on guard for a Diotrophes in your church. Refuse to imitate such ungodliness and discourage others from imitating and supporting them.

Challenge

1. "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." (2 John 2) John prayed this prayer for Gaius. Gaius was in good spiritual shape, walking in the truth. He was a beloved Christian brother following the Lord, serving the Lord, helping others and sharing. So, the apostle John could truthfully pray for his physical health in line with his spiritual health. Think about it. Would you want someone to pray like this for you? "Just as your soul prospers." How does your soul prosper? How is your spiritual well-being? Do you really want your physical health to prosper according to your spiritual state?