

Virtual Vestry notes for 7 June: [3 John](#).

John's writing has been about loving one another in 1 John and 2 John. He uses practical examples to show what he means by loving one another. And is quite clear about those who don't show love not being in the truth and not knowing God.

In 3 John, the apostle continues his exposition on love, again giving clear examples of what it is and what it's not. More specifically, he outlines hospitality as an expression of love. John wishes to encourage Gaius, who was possibly a travelling partner of Paul's in the past. John outlines his conflict with Diotrophes, who excludes those who welcome the Apostles and travelling believers (and possibly Gaius too) and then points to Demetrius as being of good character.

John's third letter could also be seen to highlight the opposing actions of love and control as represented by Demetrius and Diotrophes. This letter highlights the differences between the two types of Christians.

Vs 1-4: Joy and walking in the truth

I read that some Christians use verse 2 as a proof text to support prosperity gospel teachings.

- What are your thoughts on this idea? Feel free to make any comments you like about proof texting as well.

John states that it gives him joy to know that Gaius is walking in the truth and that there are good reports about him.

- Is this a way of knowing true Christianity, i.e. how others talk about your Christianity?
- How do we find people talking about Christians today?

Vs 5-8: Hospitality

John commends Gaius here on his hospitality and encourages Gaius by praising him for that hospitality and encouraging Gaius to continue.

- Do you think Gaius might have needed this encouragement and why?

Verses 7-8 talks about Christians supporting each other in spreading the gospel and not accepting help from non-believers.

- Discuss.

Vs 9-10: Control through lies

In this section, we see that there is a conflict within the church. John points directly to Diotrophes as being unwelcoming and who appears to have taken control by spreading lies about John and other believers and excluding those who welcome them.

- Where do you think Diotrophes is coming from and what are his possible aims?
- Where do you think John is coming from and what are his aims?

- Do we see any parallels in modern day churches.

Vs 11-12: Good vs Evil

After John's comments about Diotrophes regarding his lying and inhospitable actions, John talks about not imitating evil ways and those who walk in evil ways. John plainly states that those who do good are from God and those who do evil do not know God.

- Discuss.

John now mentions another Christian by name, Demetrius. It seems that his reputation goes before him. While John does not specifically say what the good reports about Demetrius are, it might be safe to say that he is hospitable towards John and other Christian travellers. This passage also implies that being hospitable to other Christians is walking in the truth.

- Discuss

John tells Gaius that he also speaks well of Demetrius and that he (Gaius) knows that his (John's) testimony is true. There is a theme here of the telling of lies compared to the telling of truth, that could be framed as testimony as well.

- How do we deal with the murky issues of who is telling the truth and who is not.

Vs 13-15: Writing and speaking face to face

John is eager to speak to Gaius face-to-face, but it seems a letter was needed to help the situation before John could get there.

- Discuss what you think is the overall situation here, how John deals with it and any current applications.